

# Music & Letters

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# Music and Letters

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## A COMPETITION

THE Editor takes pleasure in announcing that a friend of 'Music & Letters', who wishes to remain anonymous, has generously offered a prize of £50 for a short original treatise on some musical subject demanding research and scholarship. The competition is open only to British subjects and to British-born writers who may have acquired some other nationality, it being felt that musicology in this country particularly requires the kind of encouragement musical scholarship enjoys more readily elsewhere.

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together with any expert whose advice it may seem wise to ask.

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- (2) No MS. previously published or printed in any form may be submitted.
- (3) The length of the treatise must not be less than 20,000 and not more than 40,000 words.
- (4) The work must be submitted for judgment not later than December 31st 1939. It must be typewritten on one side of the paper only and should be sent by registered post to the Editor of 'Music & Letters', 27 George Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham 15, as early as possible before the closing date. Stamps to cover return postage and registration must be enclosed.
- (5) Parcels containing the typescript must bear no author's name and address, which should be contained in a sealed envelope bearing a motto that must be repeated on the typescript. Authors who from the first disclose their identity will take the risk of being disqualified at the jury's discretion.
- (6) It must be understood and agreed that the Editor and the Publishers are not insurers of MSS. and drawings placed in their possession and shall not be liable for the loss thereof.
- (7) Authors must be prepared to submit a birth certificate, certificate of naturalization or other conclusive proof of British nationality, if the jury so desires.
- (8) The jury binds itself to judge the works submitted solely on their merits and to publish the results of its findings in the July 1940 number of 'Music & Letters'. A cheque for £50 will be sent to the winner at the same time.
- (9) The jury reserves itself the right to let the competition lapse in the event of none of the MSS. submitted proving worthy of or suitable for acceptance under the terms set forth above.
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- (11) The jury's decision in all matters must be accepted as final and binding. Any author submitting a typescript will be understood to have accepted this and all other conditions.

To Charlotte Capell

## BEETHOVEN

BY RICHARD CAPELL

### I

As a boy he was, from his swarthiness, called "the Spaniard". Unlike his taller, handsome, ne'er-do-well father, he grew to resemble in appearance rather his Flemish grandfather, Louis van Beethoven (1712-1773), "a man short of stature, muscular, with very animated eyes". The young Beethoven's forehead was a "bullet", according to the painter of one of the first portraits. That forehead, the beetling eyebrows, the short and flattish nose, the strong-willed mouth and chin, the tousled hair, we know them more or less through a long series of generally ill-executed paintings. His beard grew thick and dark, and the boy Czerny, visiting him for a lesson once when he had not shaved for three days, thought of Robinson Crusoe. "Ugly", was the sentence pronounced upon Beethoven at twenty-five by a young woman, the singer Magdalene Willmann, to whom he had proposed marriage. "Ugly and half crazy!" The impression was not always so unfavourable. "What a noble brow he has!", a Viennese lady exclaimed at a party. Beethoven overheard: "Well, then—salute it!", he answered, bending toward her.

Ferdinand Schimon's portrait painted in 1819, when Beethoven was forty-eight and was at work on the 'Credo' of the Mass in D, was at the time the likeness thought most of by some with a right to judge. A shrewd and energetic peasant, it might be taken as representing—a peasant-innkeeper, humorous, opinionated, "a character". Joseph Stieler's portrait, also painted during the writing of the Mass, depicts a more amiably poetic and trusting Beethoven. It is assuredly too simple. The death-mask is better disregarded: it was made after post-mortem surgery had disintegrated the head. More is to be learnt from the tragic repose of the life-mask, made in 1812, when Beethoven was forty-one. Here are the very features revered

... of all to whom that Muse is dear  
Who hid her spirit of rapture from the Greek,  
Whereby our art excelleth the antique,  
Perfecting formal beauty to the ear.<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Bridges's Sonnet to Joachim.

## II

"A poet", said Shelley, "is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others ; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers ; he is not one, but both". And he goes on : "Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and in another, the creations, of their age."

Beethoven succeeded in being Beethoven with the aid of the spirit of a generation which, supervening upon a decayed order, declared for allowing a new independence and responsibility to the individual judgment and will. Now and then a provincial protest was made, as when a Leipzig reviewer pleaded against one of the quartets, saying that the aim of quartet-writing should "surely not be to express the feelings of one in despair". The comically surprised tone of Beethoven's indignation at the "wretched review"—the date was 1811, the quartet in question his Op. 74—is a pointer to the creativeness of his age. The Leipzig voice was exceptional ; the genius of the time had granted Beethoven the condition necessary to the existence of his genius, the licence to be himself. He was not criticized ; he had not to conform, only to do right in his own eyes. The Leipzig reviewer was behind the times when he asked that a Beethoven quartet should rather "by soft and pleasing play of the imagination freshen and gladden one's heart". The Viennese drawing-rooms had, years before this, not minded what extremities Beethoven went to in the expression of feeling. The phenomenon was acceptable there of this musician of the people, not humble but arrogant in his uncouthness, and not ingratiating as an artist but surprising and overawing. Not a simple but a wilful genius—principally recognized in the young Beethoven's incomparable improvisations—opened the doors of the Viennese palaces to him in the 1790s, so that at twenty-four he was lodged at Prince Lichnowsky's with a servant and a horse. It was not only talent but also—and this was the new social sign—it was originality that was made welcome. His bearishness was admitted : it was original. In making that admission Beethoven's society was creative—was a collaborator in Beethoven's creativeness.

Compelled to conformity, must not Beethoven have been frustrated ? How near, even as it was, he came to breaking upon the rack of this tough world we shall see. Together with the inner strain of doing right in his own eyes, of doing fairly by himself—a strain, given his temper, greater than any other artist has borne or, at least, has succeeded in bearing—the addition of the outer strain of fighting society for that licence must have meant frustration.

Though he won through, he remains in his fulfilment the tragic musician—tragically strained by the responsibilities of his liberty. There was, given his temper, intolerant of compromise, nothing for him but a life of effort ruling out all peace of mind, once his generation had made it clear that he was free. The fearful gift of freedom! It was his, and now he had only himself to take into account, and only his own conscience for adversary. Under a different pressure, compelled to conformity, Beethoven would conceivably have been reduced to an eccentric, fretting away his energy and sulking in his pride. The opportunity afforded him was of justifying the new belief in the sacredness of an individual nature. Now there was nothing between him and his duty to himself, the duty of seizing and shaping his thought—such was the tremendous task—truly enough to meet nothing but his own judgment.

## III

"In the eighteenth century there was", says Spengler, "especially in Germany, a Culture of Music that suffused all life". And in the course of his argument the philosopher throws out the suggestion that English Parliamentarianism was one of the musical manifestations of the century. "This form had grown up in the full bloom of Baroque and, therefore, had music in it". Spengler, it may be, would have struck Beethoven as over-subtle. The grant of spiritual freedom was not the only external influence that excited and sustained Beethoven's powers; there were also the circumstances that first educated him in music and, later on, gave him the ear of the most musically cultivated society in Europe. That Beethoven entertained the highest opinion of English political institutions is a well-attested fact. But his idealization of British culture and character was never put to the test of contact. If he had carried out his cherished plan of a visit to England he would have found here a variety of activities unknown to the Vienna of the autocratic Hapsburgs. If he had come to London in 1809, as he proposed, he would have found Burdett advocating a democratic reform of Parliament and Leigh Hunt editing '*The Examiner*'. But if there was nothing like that at Vienna, there was nothing here to compare with Vienna's intense musical culture which represented, in the absence of virtually all political and literary interests, a concentration of recreational activity.<sup>(1)</sup>

Beethoven the liberal is amusingly illustrated in a letter written when he was twenty-three to the publisher Simrock. The latter

<sup>(1)</sup> "Vienna owes its fame as a musical centre largely to the censorship of that period" (Specht).

had referred to some promise of the composer's as "cavalier talk" (*Kavalierssprache*), and Beethoven mocks at the "cavalier": "What have I done to deserve this epithet? Pooh! who admits language of that sort in our democratic times?" *In unseren demokratischen Zeiten*—written at Vienna in 1794, that has an ironical ring. But although "his ideal of a political institution was the English one"<sup>(1)</sup> and even supposing that, anticipating Spengler, he had been subtle enough to recognize a manifestation of the spirit of music in our parliamentary forms, the musician that he was—already scornful enough of Viennese dilettantism—cannot be imagined, if he had had occasion to compare the state of things here with "the culture of music suffusing all life" of the German-speaking countries, as satisfied for a moment with the want of a concentration upon music, whatever the compensations in the way of a liberal constitution and the variety of interests in English life. The place to which music was relegated by our dispersal of interests and activities is the modern relegation, the modern dispersal, for, as Spengler says, eighteenth-century Germany's concentration upon music, its music-suffused life, "to-day is hardly even a memory". Born English, Beethoven might have been a Cobbett; hardly a Beethoven. For that there were not the sustaining and exciting influences.

The first conditions of an artist's achievement are misunderstood if it is not appreciated how general must be the contemporary interest in his kind of activity when the result is great and not merely flimsy, as it was in English music in Beethoven's time, or merely esoteric as in present-day Europe. This insistence upon the creativeness of his circumstances is not to detract from "the creator of his age". But Beethoven had not been Beethoven without the welcome he received when he went up to Vienna. It was necessary that he should be able to write (at twenty-five, to his brother): "Things are going well with me, thoroughly well. My art wins friends and consideration for me; and what can I ask more?" To realize how it was possible for Beethoven to become what he was a society has to be imagined in which music played the part of a dozen different modern diversions and intellectual interests; in which every one had time for music.

Beethoven's Bonn was a town of less than 10,000 inhabitants, wholly dependent upon the court of the archbishop-elector of Cologne. The small scene is representative enough. One elector, Joseph Clemens, driven into exile by the War of the Spanish Succession, maintained a staff of musicians on his wanderings. His successor, the lavish Clemens August, in whose reign Beethoven's

<sup>(1)</sup> Thayer's Life, III. 36.

Flemish grandfather was appointed a court musician at Bonn, cultivated Italian oratorio. The next elector, Max Friedrich, established opera ; and his successor, the Hapsburg Max Franz, Beethoven's patron, was a practising musician. The music of parade, the music of recreation—it was indispensable. The court orchestra was not enough for the Bonn secretary of state Belderbusch : he maintained a private musical establishment of two clarinets, two horns and a bassoon. The fascinating Countess Belderbusch played the pianoforte to the Elector Max Franz's viola, while Duke Albrecht was the violinist. In Viennese society the recreation of music was pursued, in the last decades of the century, almost passionately. There were in the best families a hundred ladies with something near professional accomplishment as pianists. Princes and nobles were members of the orchestra of the Augarten concerts. Beethoven's Lichnowsky had been a pupil of Mozart's ; he worked hard at Beethoven's early pianoforte works. At the Lichnowskys' the Schuppanzigh Quartet played every Friday morning. The prince's present to the young Beethoven of a quartet of instruments (violins by J. Guarnerius and Amati, viola by Ruger, violoncello by A. Guarnerius) speaks of his regard for the composer and of his open-handedness.

Circumstances, then, allowed Beethoven an education strictly musical and to the point ; an uncontested response to his vocation ; and, later on, a livelihood without obligations. A different society and age that would have imposed upon him the distractions of a general education, have contested his vocation, and then have granted him only a livelihood conditional upon ephemeral services must admire the fortunate dispensation, the most astonishing concession of which was that Beethoven was not let to starve. By the time he was grown up the day of conventional patronage was already over ; nor can he be imagined as suffering to any great purpose under Bach's conditions at Cöthen or Haydn's at Esterház. The day had still to come when the technical development of music-publishing and the law's gradually conceded acknowledgment of the rights of authorship were to allow a musician like Brahms to live independently by composition. Economically, then, Beethoven was in a queer street. Yet without desperate embarrassment. He never made but one concession (Op. 91), and still came nowhere near starving. The appeals he broadcast in the last years and the tergiversations he descended to in some of his dealings with publishers and patrons were prompted by his disinclination to trench upon his savings. Beethoven lived in the main by unconventional patronage. Not comfortably enough, we shall agree. But well

enough for his purpose. Waldstein, the Lichnowskys, Lobkowitz, Kinsky and the Archduke Rudolph kept Beethoven going, or helped to do so, from no conventional obligation. It can only have been that these young princes cared for music—and in a way that for such men was only possible just then and there. Their dilettantism was something rather more than mere receptiveness to musical sensations ; that they were in different degrees themselves cultivated practitioners gave them a real contact with the composer—the refinement of the recreation of music was such as to enable them more or less to keep abreast of Beethoven in his earlier phases. The pace, of course, was in the long run too hot ; and within twenty years or so the refined recreation of the 1790s had, still under the name of music, turned into something quite other, the new Mysteries. The history of the sounding of the religion of music is to be read in the volume of Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas or, better still, in that of his string quartets. By the end of either the execution no less than the composition of music has been declared to be in a new sense vocational. But, to begin with, Beethoven's opportunity was in the diversion of a cultivated laity.

## IV

Beethoven told Czerny that as a boy he had been "negligent and not much taken to task" and that his musical education had been a poor one. Well, it served his purpose. He was inclined to envy Mozart his upbringing ; but then he did know Leopold Mozart as well as we do. What is to be seen in the scrappy records is no doubt a wretched home with that drooping mother and the ne'er-do-well father, too weak a tyrant and too poor a musician, though music was his profession, to keep up after the child Ludwig's eighth or ninth year the early attempts to force his precociousness. But that very wretchedness meant a certain grant to the boy of independence and a freedom of choice which, given his stubborn temper, may conceivably have been his saving. Too soon, by all ordinary standards, he had to fend for himself. Yet in the event the dispensation was proved admirable ; so that the shiftless home appears as perhaps necessary to the extraordinary expansion of the lad's strength of will, which the check of normal parental intentions and authoritative affection might have stunted. As for authoritative formal instruction, Beethoven's later experiences as a pupil of Haydn and Albrechtsberger do not encourage much belief in his receptiveness from that kind of source. There is no moral to be drawn ; we can only wonder at fortune's dispensation, in comparing Beethoven's unchecked way to triumphant self-realization with the

frustration of the one musician of a later generation whose potentialities appear to have been at all similar, a musician surely comparable with his predecessor in native energy of mind, superiority and, in a word, genius, and, after Beethoven, the only musician who, in a world now of luxuriantly picturesque, erotic or sentimental music, sounded something like Beethoven's absolutely virile note—that is to say the frustrated Berlioz, frustrated from the first by the pressure of fond paternal responsibility, as by the hopeless belatedness of his musical education and afterwards by the musically ignorant society of his place and time.

Thayer, who devoted a respectable lifetime to writing Beethoven's biography, makes this pronouncement (I. 60) : "The lack of proper intellectual discipline is painfully obvious in Beethoven's letters throughout his life". It is true that on an office stool he would have been at a loss. The multiplication table was never his strong suit. To school he went so unkempt and unwashed—the few times he did go to school—that the other boys retained an impression that his mother must already have been dead. On the part of Beethoven's biographer, however, it is a little hasty to identify a command of the multiplication table with intellectual discipline. Beethoven, as it happened, left on record in his Opp. 1-135 the most remarkable evidence of intellectual discipline in existence, "whereby our art excelleth the antique". The father, hoping to make of the boy's musical aptitude "a marketable commodity", as Thayer says, denied him a regular schooling. And it was Beethoven's opportunity. The years of early infancy had been made a misery by the grinding exercises imposed by the father in the hope of provoking a "marketable" brilliancy which the child did not very notably possess. He was made to practise at the time when Johann could still make him. Who can say whether, a few years later, the self-willed lad would have put up with the indispensable grind? By the time his self-will was asserting itself he had an accomplishment with which to minister to nascent pride and ambition. He played the pianoforte in public at seven, impressed people with his organ improvisations at eleven, was harpsichord-player in the theatre orchestra at twelve, was appointed assistant court organist at thirteen, was not long afterwards playing the viola at the opera. Meanwhile he had had in Neefe a serious and sympathetic teacher. Leopold Mozart would not have considered this upbringing good enough for his Wolfgang. Yet by the test of the outcome it was proved adequate; and in the light of that outcome we may be thankful enough that those—the adult Beethoven himself included—who have wished for the lad a regimen somehow

or other different, with more history or more science, had no voice in the dispensation. Like others who have kindly wished for the later Beethoven a happy family life and a more prosperous economy, they almost make us tremble if we are conscious of the precariousness of the balance and interplay of events upon which it has depended that a Milton should not be mute and inglorious.

Against Beethoven's own opinion, then, it may be maintained that his education was to the point. Whatever was wanting in detail the all-important advantage was his : his upbringing was strictly musical, unencumbered by foreign verbs. Only temerity can wish more history or science for the lad who at sixteen could impress Mozart with his improvisation. Already we have counted the advantage—the advantage for him, so self-reliant and intolerant of formal authority—of freedom from the dependence of well-brought-up children. Another thing is that he was taught music less as an art in the sense we accept than as a kind of trade or *métier*. Or, at least, as a language for his use. A language without classics. The classics of an art are created only when there are no classics. The conception of musical classics was absent from the young Beethoven's world. Music was either contemporary or archaic ; and how predominantly contemporary is illustrated by Bach's total failure to affect the young Beethoven, though Neefe—the archbishop's Lutheran organist—was, by chance, a Bachian and set his pupil to play 'The Forty-Eight'. The boy must have regarded the preludes and fugues merely as digital exercises. They influenced his own compositions no more than a schoolboy's verses are influenced by his Latin and Greek. Later on, of course, Bach and Handel are for him "the forefathers of harmony". At forty he is writing to Leipzig for "a Mass by J. S. Bach with a 'Crucifixus' on an *ostinato* bass". But the interesting difference between Beethoven's world and ours is that the relative positions of the music of the present and of the past have been reversed. Archaic music was then relegated to much the same eccentric office as our contemporary art. And not all the resources of the world of to-day, its multiplied audience, its copyright laws, its agencies of dissemination and publicity, could have afforded Beethoven the ghost of a compensation for what it must have denied him—the unencumbered room, unmonumented. In his youth it was still the natural thing, when a monarch was to be crowned, for a new opera to be commissioned of the first composer of the day, who might, like Mozart with his 'Clemenza di Tito', be expected to produce it in a fortnight or three weeks. Composition still represented not necessarily a peculiar poetic dedication but a professional supply responding to

current social demands. The classics-to-be—those composers who were to render the provision of fresh music more or less supererogatory or, at any rate, were to compel their successors to exploit eccentricity, if that word be understood to embrace the romantic escape—these were yet living men : Haydn, Mozart and—himself. No nineteenth-century and still less twentieth-century qualms made themselves felt to deter the youthful Beethoven from a career that was still reasonably practical, given the “aptitude for music” which was the measure of native gift he recognized in later years as having been his. His time caused him no doubts about the function of that gift. It was natural that, penniless though—or because—he was, he should without a debate make his life a composer’s life, for which his upbringing, ruling out the distractions of a general education, had essentially equipped him by teaching him to think in music as his mother-tongue.

## V

Languages, too, have their destinies ; their sappy youth, their florescence, their age of exhaustion. Beethoven’s language was tonal music : the adjective being understood in the specific sense whose nouns are tonality, key-relationship. No other can conceivably have served him for adequate self-expression or have raised him to the supreme eminence he attained, for there has been no other at all comparable in the history of music. This language, which he found in its springtime and left to the declension of a gorgeous autumn, was one in which instrumental sounds became capable of developing forms as highly organized as those of architecture and poetic drama and a corresponding capacity for intellectual and emotional content, all unexampled in the music of other civilizations and epochs. If Beethoven’s genius explored its possibilities with almost superhuman energy, it was his opportunity that the medium, incomparable and unique, lay ready and fresh for his handling. The situation, in brief, was that Beethoven arrived when harmony had come to the point of providing music with the resource of what may be called a kind of chiaroscuro, by the establishment of the modern post-Renaissance sense of relationship between keys and of their effect, in a composed scheme, as of lighter and darker planes. And still not yet was the chromatization—inevitable sooner or later, once modulation had become a recognized device, and all the sooner when attention was concentrated upon its wondrous effects—not yet was the “autumnal” chromatization which was to signify the closing of the era of tonal music. Beethoven’s temperament and genius impelled him, together with the very fact of his juniority to

Haydn and Mozart, to extend his references among the keys and, by making more of their contrasting characters, to produce enormously enhanced effects of 'dramatic chiaroscuro'. An example is simply not to be named of his plunges into the abysses on the left, or subdominant direction, or of his ascents, made so momentous by preparations of unheard-of tensity, into the light, to say nothing of all the transitions to milder zones solemnly veiled or peaceful and bland ; since one symphony, sonata and quartet after another—and often as memorably at the coda as at the naturally most dramatic moments after the double-bar and in the preparation and achievement of the tonic's return—offers vicissitudes and triumphs so equally characteristic, though of a variety to which our metaphor of light and shade, however useful, does no sort of justice. After Beethoven harmony, enriching itself, purchased luxury at the cost of its male vigour ; and modulation, having said what it had of importance to say, sank in course of time into a world of dreams, Cockayne or *Schlafaffenland*.

The Viennese symphony was the issue of a century whose music was dominated by opera. In Beethoven the actors, so to say, are serried conformations of a few notes which, whether their significance is more or less immediately arresting, owe their origin and the sense they possess equally for author and audience to the endeavours of some generations of composers to match and enhance the force of verbal expression on the stage with music. Sonata ("first movement") form, it can here go almost without saying, is in all this what we principally have in mind, since the variation, the scherzo, the song-movement, the fugue are Beethoven's subsidiary vehicles. It was his heritage as Shakespeare's was the five-act play in verse ; and he cannot be conceived as doing without it. Like English tragedy, the form came into existence practically within its master's own time and was well-nigh exhausted by him ; and is thus very typical of the art of European man in the miracle of its invention, the glory of its content, the swiftness of the exploitation. A drama in sound—the very nature of whose contrasting and reconciled forces had been inconceivable to musicians but a few generations earlier ! In parenthesis : "the contrasting character of keys" here means their relative and not, in spite of Beethoven himself, absolute characters. Beethoven fancifully attributed "majesty" to the key of D $\flat$ , and so on. Such illusions are perhaps to be explained as a relic of childhood's impressions. The difference in the looks of the key signatures is vivid in the eyes of a child involved in the first difficulties of musical notation. The child is an animist : he supposes human attributes in the brute creation and sentience in stock and

stone ; and when keys wear physiognomies as dissimilar as, let us say, D major and A $\flat$  minor it is natural for him to ascribe to them individualities as distinct as brother John and cousin Kate. This animism is no doubt at the back of Beethoven's " majestic D $\flat$ ", and all such characterizations of keys by all musicians, great or small.<sup>(4)</sup>

A factor remains unexplained, even granted the intensity of Beethoven's native strength of will or otherwise his genius. This is his ethics. The records afford no clue to the influence that determined in the ill-kempt, uncouth young musician, son of a squalid house, the bent towards stoicism, puritanism or—let us risk the word—righteousness. Indeed it is for us something now undis sociable from his genius. Born with a violent nature, Beethoven represents in his art not the taming of violence but its conversion into supremely effective energy under the direction of an intellect that can only be called a moral force. This no more implies that Beethoven's behaviour conformed in particulars to all the accepted proprieties than that his manners did. But the profoundly and, above all, actively, strenuously moral character of Beethoven's work—"moral" in the ordinary dictionary sense of distinguishing between right and wrong, and more, in the debating of the question with almost incessant persistence and passion—is so overwhelmingly obvious as to amount to evidence of the authenticity of the corresponding verbal expressions reported of him.<sup>(5)</sup> "Strife between two principles"—his own words are so recorded about one sonata movement, almost superfluously. Let Romain Rolland speak :

This antagonism between voluntary reason and rebellious nature brought to heel is one of the laws of Beethoven's art and being. Nor can it be disregarded, for in this he was the representative hero of a whole age of humanity. And if, like all others, that age is now past and gone, there survive from it eternally, as from other ages, types which are of all races and all classes—not of an age but for all time!—representative heroes in whom humanity will recognize itself world without end.<sup>(6)</sup>

<sup>(4)</sup> Marion Scott in her Life of Beethoven suggests that his ascription of absolute character to a key may have been derived from his study of 'The Forty-Eight' as a boy, and that the different sentiments so powerfully expressed in the various preludes and fugues remained associated in his mind with the keys employed. And, indeed, to compare the C $\sharp$  minor Preludes and Fugues in 'The Forty-Eight' with Beethoven's Op. 131 or the second E major Fugue with his Sonata, Op. 109, is almost to be persuaded that keys have their own characters—but not inherently, only by force of the parts they were made to play in 'The Forty-Eight'.

<sup>(5)</sup> E.g., in the diary handed down to us in the rather mysterious Fischhoff manuscript. Thus in 1812 : "Ergebnheit, innigste Ergebnheit in dein Schicksal, nur diese kann dir die Opfer—zu dem Dienstgeschäft geben—o harter Kampf! . . . Du darfst nicht Mensch sein, für dich nicht, nur für andre . . . o Gott, gib mir Kraft, mich zu besiegen, mich darf ja nichts an das Leben fesseln."

<sup>(6)</sup> 'Le Chant de la résurrection', I, 296.

The question is whence came the influence which made for this ethical bent, preparing the young Beethoven to lend so ready an ear when the Breunings, perhaps in 1787, introduced him to Plutarch, and which is exemplified incidentally in such an entry in a late Conversation Book (1820) as "The moral law within us and above us the starry heavens. Kant !!!" It can hardly be attributed to the church as Beethoven knew it. Though he was its servant in impressionable years he remained in this respect remarkably unsusceptible and independent. The deism of all his mature life was arrived at without a struggle with any received orthodoxy or even a wrench. We read Beethoven's morality as in the first place an expression of the self-will and ambition of his genius. The humiliating home, the worn-out mother and dissipated father : all that meant, if it were not to be acquiesced in and the suit followed, the son's reaction and resort to an opposite regimen of principle if not wholly of practice, for freedom's and ambition's sake. The father's dissipations were vulgar ; those of the archbishop's court more elegant. That the abbess of Vilich should in Beethoven's young days have been at once the mistress of the Archbishop-Elector Max Friedrich and of his minister Belderbusch—the latter assuming the paternity of the children irrespectively<sup>(1)</sup>—may to-day look, however reprehensible, above all quaint ; but such immorality went with the general decay of an order, spelling in the eyes of impatient and ambitious youth not merely laxness but also futility. Another age can afford to be amused by rococo manners. But it would be unimaginative not to understand the young Beethoven's contumacious reaction or his welcome for Plutarch's standard of Greco-Roman virtue and honour<sup>(2)</sup> if this is thought of as coming to him not as a conventional imposition but a new ideal affording an escape from futility and support and direction for his self-will, as, in days to come, a foothold in his desperate tussle with disastrous circumstance. "I have often cursed the Creator and my existence ; Plutarch taught me resignation"—so wrote Beethoven under the shadow of his deafness.

## VI

Beethoven was twenty-seven when he first became aware that his hearing was impaired. The affliction increased by fits and starts. Perhaps not for another two years did he face the possibility

<sup>(1)</sup> Thayer, I, 16.

<sup>(2)</sup> "οὐιρτοῦτις τε καὶ ὄνωρις."

of incurableness and a total loss of the faculty.<sup>(10)</sup> Soon this was an obsession. He unburdens himself of the secret to an intimate friend or two : " Know that I am losing the noblest part of me, my hearing ".<sup>(11)</sup> " You can hardly think how dreary, how woeful my life has been for the last two years : the failure of my hearing has been like a spectre haunting me everywhere, and I fled from mankind ".<sup>(12)</sup> The crucial document is the so-called " Heiligenstadt Testament " of October 6th 1802, a confession and apologia which did not see the light for many years. It was written " for my brothers ", " to be read and executed after my death ". He was to live on for nearly twenty-five more years, but at Heiligenstadt in 1802 Beethoven must have felt that death was near—so much is unmistakable from the tone of the testament, the tale of the torments he has been through, of his resistance to the temptation of suicide, of his resignation dearly won and precariously held. During the next few years Beethoven's deafness was a secret for no one in his circle, but the pretence of ignoring it could still be kept up. So late as 1812 he seemed to casual observation to be only hard of hearing, but by about 1816 the faculty had virtually gone. At the first performance of the ninth Symphony (May 7th, 1824) he did not hear the tumultuous applause. Rellstab visiting him in the next year was shown the famous Broadwood piano.<sup>(13)</sup>

Without taking his eyes off me he gently struck a chord. . . . C major with the right hand and B as a bass in the left, and continued his gaze uninterruptedly on me, repeating the false chord several times to let the sweet tone of the instrument reverberate.<sup>(14)</sup>

Till civilization ends men can never cease marvelling at this design of fate. That it was cruel is not to be minimized for all our admiring satisfaction with the outcome. At times a misunderstanding of the nature of such musicianship as Beethoven's has led some to exaggerate the disadvantage his deafness entailed on his creative work. This is better discounted. A few miscalculations in his scoring amount to nothing beside the evidence abounding in the later works of the independence and inventive fineness of his imaginative ear. It is rash to ascribe the strain imposed upon the medium, choir, pianoforte, string quartet, to anything but the

<sup>(10)</sup> Beethoven's pathological history is obscure. He suffered from smallpox at some unknown time and for years was troubled by a form of enteritis, with which—rejecting the formerly accepted theory of its syphilitic origin (see Grove, I, 371, ed. 1927)—some modern opinions connect his deafness (see Rolland's ' *De l'héroïque*' , II, 351).

<sup>(11)</sup> Letter to Amenda, 1800 or 1801.

<sup>(12)</sup> Letter to Wegeler, 1802.

<sup>(13)</sup> " Hoc instrumentum est Thomas Broadwood (Londini) donum, propter ingenium illustrissimi Beethoven"—inscription above the keys.

<sup>(14)</sup> Thayer, III, 209.

necessities of the driving purpose, when pages and again pages exemplify alongside the heroic intellectual exertion a spring of magical effects of sheer sound. Beethoven's mind's ear, in a word, had become independent of the actual sense. And still the deprivation to the man was cruel. We have seen that it drove him nearly desperate. His apprehensions were clear enough in some ways, in others painfully vague. The worst, if he suspected a possible deterioration of his musical faculty, did not happen. What he can hardly have foreseen was the deterioration—not detrimental to his music at all, as it turned out, but disastrous to the man's happiness—of normality in his everyday relations with men and women. In the last fifteen years the isolated Beethoven as a social being presents aspects that are hardly sane. We know not, in the history of his adoption of the unhappy Karl, whether to feel sorrier for the passionately but unimaginatively well-meaning uncle or for the nephew, the bewildered and woebegone object of the great man's pent-up, unintelligible devotion. And some sympathy is extorted for the servants in the tale of Beethoven's domestic vicissitudes.<sup>(14)</sup>

The first fear was for his position as an executant. An effort must be made to realize how great a part Beethoven's power as a pianist had played in building his fame; how much, too, he must have counted upon it to assert his superiority among men, or in a word, to satisfy his ambition. Then let examples be recalled of superior talents (Liszt's, Busoni's) distracted by the virtuoso's career to the frustration, more or less, of the work of creation. That cup was dashed from Beethoven's lips; well, it was no longer a temptation. Beethoven's work was accomplished by force of undivided concentration. But not his will alone could have ensured him that bleak and blessed isolation which was his through the cruelty of chance. His disaster turned out to be a protection; it must also have been an instigation. In so many words, he uttered his challenge to circumstance. We have seen that there were hours of despair; but ambition easily prevailed. In the letter of 1801 in which he renounces all hope of happiness he comes out with: "I will grip Fate by the throat; never shall I be quite laid low". And the year of the "Heiligenstadt Testament" was also that of the triumphant second Symphony.

The remainder of Beethoven's life, except a dull period between 1813 and 1817, was to be crowded with unimaginable

<sup>(14)</sup> Extract from 1820 diary: "April 17th, kitchen-maid arrives. 19th, bad day. May 16th, kitchen-maid given notice. 19th, kitchen-maid leaves. 30th, housekeeper arrives. July 1st, kitchen-maid arrives. 28th, kitchen-maid runs away. . . . September 6th, maid arrives. October 2nd, maid leaves. December 12th, kitchen-maid arrives. 18th, kitchen-maid given notice. 27th, the new housemaid arrives", &c.

victories.<sup>(14)</sup> They fall into two series which may be roughly characterized as, the one heroically active, the other ("third-period Beethoven") introspective. Though the former comprises a great deal of serenely contemplative music, its general force, if we make so bold as to apply a word to it, is proudly confident, the sublimated expression of Beethoven's ambition, of the superior man's glorious self-assertion, his joy in contest and domination. So, in the first ten years or so of his affliction, did he turn the tables on the adversary, but for whom we know not what of the energy here immortally incorporated would have passed into ephemeral forms. And still it would be presumptuous to deny an unafflicted Beethoven the possibility of these second-period triumphs, however strong the conviction that such power already represents a canalization of the mind's activity by some force of circumstance and accident outside mortal will. Third-period Beethoven, however, is different. It is not only that the art is so much more subtle. This is but one aspect, though in sheer subtlety of design the Quartet Op. 131, written in Beethoven's last year, surpasses all other musical compositions. If the word assertion is allowably applied to the second period, then perhaps "argument" may similarly be applied to the third.



This phrase is ejaculated in a not unhappy letter of 1814. He had conquered the world. In the years of his closer solitariness the resource remained for him of debate with himself. The result was an unpredictable music. Still incantatory, being music; on occasion, supremely so, e.g., the Variations of Op. 111. But, above all, great in pith and moment. If "programme music" were not a term with vulgar associations it could apply to the mass of Beethoven's principal productions. "He worked", says Bekker, "from the representation of realistic impressions which he gradually purged of their crudity as he laboured upon his subject. The Battle Symphony is an example of his work in the crude state". The work of the last years—though we shall do it wrong, being so majestical, to imagine literally translating it back—incorporates the cogitations, even to the use of the closest versions of verbal expressions, of the vigorous mind almost excluded from ordinary exchanges and impelled to pore upon its fatality with every kind of enquiry, but still not

<sup>(14)</sup> Only the opera 'Fidelio' represents but a partial conquest of the matter. Even so George Sampson can say: ". . . 'Fidelio', that noble, faulty work which makes most other operas seem shabby in comparison".

fanatically tragic, rather open to humour and consolation. Mankind's spokesman, then ; his affliction made the epitome of man's fatality ; his art, his virile, classical language, made the expression of what none could have imagined of music, the expression of the inner debate, concentrated, dramatic and lucid as was realizable only through compulsory introspection ! It was necessary for this end that the chief of musicians should go deaf.

de la mort de Villiers de l'Isle Adam, et il est difficile de faire une analyse de son œuvre sans se rappeler que celle-ci fut écrite dans un état d'inspiration qui n'a pas été atteint depuis lors.

## VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM AND MUSIC

By G. JEAN-AUBRY

"IN the course of his nomadic existence he often called a bed his own, sometimes a writing-table, and always a pianoforte." Thus, after the death of Villiers de l'Isle Adam<sup>(1)</sup>, wrote one of his most devoted friends, who perhaps exaggerated a little, for the author of the 'Contes cruels' had no possessions of his own, save his ancient and illustrious name and his too long misunderstood genius.

But at least this sentence by Henry Roujon<sup>(2)</sup> testifies in its metaphorical fashion to this great writer's exceptional taste for music. Mysterious though his noble and wretched existence still remains—an existence of the beginning of which we shall presently celebrate the centenary and which ended nearly fifty years ago—we know that the enchantments of music were a constant factor of it. Not one of those who, having known him, left more or less accurate descriptions of him has failed to allude to this; and he himself, although none too communicative, by no means disguised the fact.

He showed a taste for music from infancy, and although he did not go so far as to reveal it in the title of that first work of his, 'Le Chant du Bossu', of which nothing else remains, we know from the recollections of his cousin, Robert du Pontavice de Heussey<sup>(3)</sup>, that only a little later, as a very young man at Saint-Brieuc, he often played the piano—though we cannot tell whether he ever learnt it properly—and indulged from that time onward in improvisations into which he discharged the overflow of his romantic effusions. The truth is that we do not know what music he particularly affected and liked to play, nor even whether his musical performances ever went beyond these extemporalizations.

Having settled in Paris when he was about twenty, and soon afterwards published a volume of his 'Premières Poésies', which attracted no attention, he at least won the favour of the editor of a review, Cochinet by name. It was Cochinet who published a notice

<sup>(1)</sup> Born November 28th 1838; died August 19th 1889.

<sup>(2)</sup> 'Revue bleue', September 21st 1889; reprinted in 'La Galerie des bustes' (Hachette, Paris, 1909, p. 125).

<sup>(3)</sup> 'Villiers de l'Isle Adam : l'écrivain, l'homme' (Savine, Paris, 1893).

of this volume in the number of that review, 'La Causerie', dated December 11th 1859, and it was he who said to Villiers in that notice : " You, who are a musician of the soul and so passionate a lover of fine tunes, you shall write musical criticism for us ". And in that very number Villiers de l'Isle Adam published a notice of a repeat performance of Félicien David's 'Herculanum', which had been produced at the Opéra on March 4th, following this up in the next number with a criticism of a revival of 'Il Trovatore'. His contributions ceased after these two articles, for no explicable reason, since this weekly review continued to appear for some months. Perhaps Villiers was obliged to return to Brittany just then, or he may have found it difficult to secure payment for his articles—we do not know ; but at least he got into touch with several contributors to the review, and it is even quite probable that, as M. Marcel Longuet suggests,<sup>(4)</sup> it was thanks to 'La Causerie' that he met Baudelaire and became his friend.

These two little musical essays are so far the first known prose writings by the future author of 'Axel'. Although they do not show all the qualities of his style, they give a foretaste of its individual flow and flavour : they are at any rate very different from what was more often than not published under the name of musical criticism in France at that time—writing which only too readily concealed incompetence under a spate of exclamations. These small notices do not in the least look like the fireworks a young man will let off in his desire to attract attention : they have the mingled sobriety and ardour of tone of a man for whom music is above all things a predilection and a serious art.

Let me quote two passages :

The music by the composer of 'Le Désert' is gentle and brilliant, full of sad serenities. The strength of character his talent shows is due, we think, to three great qualities that distinguish the masters : simplicity in transitions, suavity of melody and a consummate skill in the resolution of chords. . . . M. David introduces his motifs, groups his voices and calculates his orchestral effects in a way that probes every phase of a general harmoniousness to its subtlest depths. 'Herculanum' is one great melody—magnificent because it is one.

Here German and Italian forms are united by powerful originality. The chorus of Christians in the second act is grandiose : Beethoven would have set his name to it wholeheartedly.

After a few more remarks on the character of the work, he goes into a detailed criticism of the performance, like a man who has

<sup>(4)</sup> Marcel Longuet, to whom we owe so many discoveries concerning Villiers de l'Isle Adam, reprinted these two notices, with an excellent introduction, in the ' Mercure de France ' of March 15th 1932.

studied the score closely and for whom the art of singing is not a dead letter.

In the article on the 'Trovatore', written with less assurance, we read :

Apart from the fourth act, which is one of the finest pages in human music, 'Il Trovatore' is a plaint, the airs, choruses and duets of which are written in the minor to begin with, only to fall into the major a few bars later. This would be wholly disagreeable were it not that Verdi has avoided such a catastrophe by a touch of genius. The score is in waltz or polka movements almost from start to finish. . . . The lightness of the airs, accompanied by fantastic tremolos or by chords almost always in block harmony, gives the work that feeling of strangeness which has captivated the hearer ever since the first performance. . . . In the fourth act every modulation, every inflection enlivens, touches and charms us profoundly ; nothing weakens the funereal concert of that sublime symphony, the 'Miserere'.

And he goes on to criticize or praise the performers with the same care as in the preceding article, saying of one of them that she is "the very Preciosa of the immortal Weber's dreams".

It would be hazardous, of course, to draw from these two short notices conclusions as to the musical nature of Villiers de l'Isle Adam ; but it is permissible to draw attention to its signs. The quite unnecessary allusions to the names of Beethoven and Weber as well as an evident inclination to consider music from its serious side and to prefer the tendencies of German symphony to those of the Italian opera of the day explain easily enough why, in the matter of music, this young man with a decided personality of his own found no difficulty in agreeing with Baudelaire and why, a little later, he should have found himself carried away quite naturally by an ardent admiration for Wagner that was very exceptional at that time.

It is nearly certain that he came to know Wagner through the author of 'Les Fleurs du mal'. Wagner had settled in Paris a year or more before the tumultuous performance of 'Tannhäuser' at the Opéra on March 13th 1861, which gave rise to Baudelaire's famous pamphlet, 'Tannhauser [sic] à Paris', published at first in the 'Revue Européenne' from April onwards. We are told that Villiers de l'Isle Adam was present at that performance, which is the more probable because, apart from his already well-known taste for music, he had certainly met Wagner, who from the beginning of his stay in Paris had cleverly cultivated relations and friendships among certain groups of artists, and particularly that in which Villiers de l'Isle Adam had by that time begun to shine.

Wagner was then fifty ; Villiers twenty-three. The latter had

published almost nothing, although he must have already finished 'Isis' and 'Elén'. Wagner was in full expansion of his creative genius. Even Paris was not altogether ignorant of it, since he had extracts from 'The Flying Dutchman', 'Tannhäuser', 'Lohengrin' and even 'Tristan' performed at concerts which, although they clearly did not attract large audiences, aroused interest and admiration in certain artistic circles.

Villiers de l'Isle Adam's youthful enthusiasm could not fail to give satisfaction to Wagner in particular. This fair-haired young man, small and dreamy-eyed but all vibrant with intelligence and already gifted with an astounding talent for verbal improvisation, could not pass unnoticed. All testimonies agree as to the impression of genius Villiers had begun to make by that time. Versed already in German philosophy and naturally inclined towards grandeur of conception, he might well be attracted without being unduly surprised by the dramatic plan of the 'Ring', the exalted qualities of which Wagner would conjure up in conversation.

Wagner took pleasure in the company of this splendid young Breton. Together they explored many parts of Paris, and one day, we are told, the composer showed Villiers the window of a garret, not far from Saint-Eustache, where he had worked at 'The Flying Dutchman' in 1840. In the course of these conversations Villiers conceived an admiration for Wagner which he was never to lose; and he could already have replied, as he did later to some blockhead who asked him whether Wagner's talk was agreeable: "Sir, do you think the talk of Mount Etna is agreeable?"

It was soon after the meetings with Wagner that Villiers de l'Isle Adam, as we are assured by du Pontavice de Heussey, conceived a whole score for 'Esmeralda', the opera libretto Victor Hugo had drawn from his 'Notre-Dame de Paris' for the use of Mlle Bertin, daughter of the director of the 'Journal des Débats', who took but the poorest advantage of it. The fact is that we do not know whether Villiers de l'Isle Adam let Victor Hugo—who cared nothing about music—hear this score, which, we are informed, he had finished only in his head but played on the piano. It seems that he had a second one in his mind, composed for the 'Prometheus Bound' of Aeschylus. His cousin and biographer, du Pontavice, asserts that he had the privilege of hearing the author perform the principal scenes of these two operas on the piano, of which, however, he unfortunately gives us but the vaguest details and of which nothing has been preserved.

A few years later, in October 1867, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, who had not long before published his dramas 'Elén' and 'Morgane'

and was then living in the very heart of the literary and poetic activity of his generation, experienced one of the too rare good fortunes of his life. In the company of a musician, Armand Gouzien, he became editor of a review that had just been founded—‘*La Revue des Lettres et des Arts*’. The very first number contained a musical article of an austere nature, a study by Gevaert on the beginnings of harmony in France, and the following issue had another by the same author on the origins of the air. Villiers de l'Isle Adam published two of his most important works there, ‘*Claire Lenoir*’ and ‘*L'Intersigne*’, but music had no part in them. At the end of five months the journal expired for want of readers, and Villiers published next to nothing during the five years that followed.

That he moved in musical circles at this time is proved by some pages he wrote and published nearly twenty years later.<sup>(4)</sup> At Versailles, as a slender young girl already gifted with some talent for composition, Augusta Holmès then lived with her father and brought writers, musicians and painters together in her drawing-room. Villiers there met Gounod in all the splendour of his recent glory as well as Saint-Saëns, who was working at ‘*Samson et Dalila*’ and treated himself in that drawing-room to the pleasure of playing portions of ‘*Lohengrin*’, the march from which he was about that time arranging for piano, violin and organ.

The Wagnerian fervour in Villiers de l'Isle Adam had only increased: although he could no longer keep it warm in the presence of Baudelaire, whose tragic life had come to an end, he had converted an ardent and very active young poet, Catulle Mendès, with whom he twice went to Triebschen in the company of Judith Gautier, who was then Mendès's wife.<sup>(5)</sup>

In a ‘*Souvenir*’ published by the ‘*Revue Wagnérienne*’ in 1887,<sup>(6)</sup> where Villiers de l'Isle Adam reported a talk he had with Wagner on the occasion of the first of these visits, a talk in the course of which the composer affirmed to him his Christian belief, the following may be read:

In the autumn of 1868 I found myself at Lucerne; I spent nearly all the days and evenings at Richard Wagner's.

The great innovator lived a very retired life, receiving only a couple of amiable French writers (my travelling-companions) and

<sup>(4)</sup> ‘Augusta Holmès’, an article published in ‘*Le Succès*’ of November 11th 1885 and posthumously reprinted in the volume entitled ‘*Chez les Passants*’ (Paris, 1890, p. 63 et seq.). One of the ‘*Contes crus*’, ‘*Virginia et Paul*’, is dedicated “to Mademoiselle Augusta Holmès”.

<sup>(5)</sup> See ‘*Wagner and Judith Gautier*’ by Robert L. Jacobs, ‘*Music & Letters*’, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, April 1937.

<sup>(6)</sup> ‘*La Revue Wagnérienne*’, June 15th 1887; republished in the collection ‘*Chez les Passants*’ (Paris, 1890).

myself. For about a fortnight past we had been kept there by the splendid reception he gave us. Our host's simplicity, sprightliness and hospitable attention made these happy days unforgettable for us : a native greatness was discerned by us behind the easy manner in which he treated us.

This journey did not in fact take place in the autumn of 1868, but the following year, on the occasion of the first performance of '*Rhinegold*' in Munich, as is confirmed by the recollections, both of Wagner and of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, which Judith Gautier published in '*Le Collier des jours*'.<sup>(1)</sup>

Villiers is here seen as even more enthusiastic than his travelling-companions over the idea of seeing Wagner at Triebischen : we can almost hear him humming a motif from the '*Mastersingers*' in the streets of Lucerne, and his success with the rifle at Zug is described, where he went on an excursion with Wagner and took part in the federal shooting competition. The three French visitors, with Wagner and Cosima von Bülow, went to Treib, to Seelisberg and to the Axenstein ; and on their return Wagner insisted that Villiers should read them his one-act play, '*La Révolte*', which was to be produced in Paris a few months later.

In spite of Wagner's prohibition to his friends to be present at the forthcoming production of '*Rhinegold*', the travellers must needs go to Munich, where they had been sent by Paris newspapers for an exhibition of pictures. Once in Munich, in the company of Liszt, Hans Richter and Franz Servais, in the very centre of the conflict that divided the royal office-holders and Wagner's partisans, how could Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Judith Gautier and Catulle Mendès resist obtaining a glimpse of the work about which Wagner had told them and of which he had played them a number of fragments ? Moreover, Wagner himself came to Munich at the call of his defenders, though he left again almost at once. Richter declined to conduct the work and rejoined the master at Triebischen, where the three French people stayed once more a few days later, before their return to Paris. A little before their departure for Triebischen Villiers de l'Isle Adam had published in '*La Liberté*' one of his finest tales, '*Azraël*' (which later became '*L'Announceur*') with the following dedication : "To Richard Wagner, the prince of profound music, this poem is dedicated".

"Two months before the Franco-Prussian war",<sup>(2)</sup> says Villiers in the article on Augusta Holmès already mentioned, "I met at Triebischen, near Lucerne, in Richard Wagner's own house,

<sup>(1)</sup> (Paris, Juven, 1909) '*Le Troisième Rang du collier*'.

<sup>(2)</sup> The original has "guerre allemande".

Mlle Holmès, to whom the composer of 'Tristan' gave this advice : 'Belong to no school, least of all to mine'."

It was not two months but hardly a fortnight before the declaration of war that Villiers, Mendès and Judith Gautier again went to Munich, breaking the journey at Lucerne on the way there and back. Whether Villiers was thinking of the prohibition of the preceding year, or whether Wagner for the second time expressed to his French friends his repugnance at their hearing 'Rhinegold' in Munich without the other three parts of the 'Ring', it is certain that Villiers, when he wrote this article in 1885, said he had before him a letter from Wagner, received in Munich and unfortunately not preserved, from which he quotes this passage :

So you are going with your friends to see how they amuse themselves with virile works : well, I rely, in spite of all, on a few inextinguishable passages in this work, in order to save those parts of it that will not be understood.

And he recalls the memory he has kept of seeing at that performance "in the front row of the gallery of the nobility Mlle Augusta Holmès who, seated next to the Abbé Liszt, followed the performance of 'Rhinegold' with the illustrious master's full score".

War had already been declared for a week when Catulle Mendès and Villiers were still staying with Wagner, as an unpublished letter stamped "Lucerne, July 27th 1870" proves, a letter in which Catulle Mendès informed Stéphane Mallarmé, who was staying at Avignon, of the time of their arrival there :

Neither in a week nor in a month, but in ten or twelve days. I should have left at once if Richard Wagner, with whom I am staying at Lucerne, had not declared this morning that he relied on keeping us for more than a week yet. . . . Send me all details of departures and prices. . . . Villiers is coming, of course.<sup>(10)</sup>

Their departure was confirmed a few days later by a note from both Mendès and Villiers de l'Isle Adam saying that they were leaving Lucerne for Lyons that very moment and would go on to Avignon by boat.

Neither the disasters of the Franco-Prussian war nor even the all too Germanic unseemliness of 'Eine Capitulation' impaired Villiers de l'Isle Adam's admiration for and interest in Wagner's work. Contemporary witnesses assert that he went to Bayreuth for the opening of the festival theatre in 1876. It is possible ; but no document from Villiers's own hand exists to confirm the rumour. He does not seem to have gone there in 1882 for the production of 'Parsifal'.

<sup>(10)</sup> Unpublished letter.

On February 9th 1883 Villiers de l'Isle Adam published the '*Contes cruels*'. He had transferred the dedication "à Monsieur Richard Wagner" from the tale of '*L'Annonciateur*' to the head of a musical fantasy, '*Le Secret de l'ancienne musique*', the subject of which was more in the dedicatee's line. It derided the old-fashioned melomaniacs with the aid of nothing more than the "jingling Johnnie".

Four days later Wagner died at Venice. It does not seem as though Villiers referred to this death otherwise than by the reference he made indirectly in '*Le Tzar et les Grands Ducs*' four months later, where he recalled having met Liszt again at Weimar on the occasion of some Wagnerian performances in the summer of 1870.<sup>(11)</sup> It is impossible to be sure, however, for in spite of the minute research made for many years by M. Marcel Longuet it is more than probable that articles or poems by Villiers de l'Isle Adam still remain buried and unknown in various modest and ephemeral publications. The adversities of his life did not allow him to preserve them or to find the leisure necessary for their rediscovery, nor was the curious dispersal after his death of such writings as had remained in his hands calculated to facilitate research.

Thus we find on the fly-leaf of the original edition of his drama, '*Le Nouveau Monde*', mentioned as part of a collection of '*Méditations littéraires*', essays on '*Lohengrin*' and '*Rhinegold*' which still remain completely unknown, although there is every reason to suppose that these studies had actually been written at that time.

Incredible as it may seem, nobody connected with the French press at the time of Wagner's death thought of asking for and securing for himself the recollections of one of the very few French writers who had long been intimately acquainted with him and to whom he had many times given proof of his very special regard.<sup>(12)</sup>

We know from Judith Gautier that when Villiers de l'Isle Adam had finished reading '*La Révolte*' to Wagner, the latter declared :

You are a true poet, and I should like to see you cast on the ideal world, which is more important than the real to us artists, that penetrating glance with which you have transfixed the existing world.

We know, moreover, from the same trustworthy witness that Wagner had been very much amused by the figure of Tribulat Bonhomet,

<sup>(11)</sup> Published in the '*Figaro*' of May 12th 1883 and reprinted in '*L'Amour suprême*' (M. de Bruhoff, Paris, 1886, p. 250 et seq.).

<sup>(12)</sup> A quotation from '*The Valkyrie*' in French, "tes yeux, gouffres clairs . . .", serves as a motto for the tenth chapter of the last book of '*L'Eve future*'. Another musical allusion occurs in the following chapter, which has for its motto a verse beginning "Adieu, jusqu'à l'aurore", with the indication "music by Schubert".

Villiers de l'Isle Adam's favourite creation, which he constantly went on enriching. The French writer having been presented to King Ludwig II of Bavaria, whom Wagner had told some of the exploits and sayings of Bonhomet, the king asked Villiers to give a reading from his work at court, a performance that was much enlivened by the wholly involuntary resemblance to Liszt with which the author had invested the ferocious and absurd Dr. Bonhomet.

It was only in 1885, when the 'Revue Wagnérienne' was founded, that Villiers de l'Isle Adam's contributions were sought. He published there, on May 8th 1885, 'La Légende de Bayreuth', which to-day figures as 'La Légende moderne' in the collection of 'Histoires insolites', and, two years later, the 'Souvenir' already mentioned. In 'La Légende de Bayreuth' he imagined Wagner prophesying his glory and the incredible circumstances of his triumph thirty years in advance, and makes the artist say to the grocer, for whom material values alone count :

You are not without knowledge that men have appeared who called themselves Orpheus, Tyrtaeus, Gluck, Beethoven, Weber, Sebastian Bach, Mozart, Pergolesi, Palestrina, Rossini, Handel, Berlioz and others. Imagine that these men are the discoverers of that mysterious harmony of the human race which, without them, deprived even of the million of vile apes whose lucrative parody has debased them, would still be clucking.

If the choice of these composers indicated—and why should it not do so?—Villiers de l'Isle Adam's preferences, it must be admitted that it testifies to a particularly good musical taste.

Before the time of his Wagnerian pilgrimages and very shortly after Baudelaire's death in 1867 Villiers de l'Isle Adam, we are informed, frequently let his friends hear songs he had composed on several poems from 'Les Fleurs du mal'—among others 'La Mort des amants', 'Recueillement' and 'Le Vin des assassins'. In the matter of the first two he thus anticipated Claude Debussy himself. In the 'Recueillement', his cousin and biographer du Pontavice tells us, "he had achieved a most moving effect by the dragging and mysterious accompaniment in which he enveloped the admirable final verse".

It was in some rather more tardy recollections that another hearer referred to our subject in 1912. Émile Blémont, who had founded a review called 'La Renaissance littéraire' forty years earlier and welcomed Villiers de l'Isle Adam's contributions with a readiness that was very rare at the time, in those days had occasion to see him frequently, and he declares that Villiers was now and

again seized with a veritable musical frenzy. He would suddenly interrupt a conversation and, turning to the piano, exclaim : "It is music we want now".

And so he began at the piano the religious and courtly song of Ronsard, 'Quand au temple nous serons . . .'. Then, almost without a pause, he attacked the air of King Louis XII's fifers. He turned to us, laughed, put his head in his hands for a moment, rose, said the one word "Baudelaire", improvised a prelude of solemn tenderness and began to sing 'La Mort des amants'. I have never heard anything more soothing, more delicate, more sweetly evanescent, more divinely aerial than this simple and marvellous sonnet poised on this simple and marvellous music. The tone-colour, the intonations of that voice, fitted the music and the words to perfection : it penetrated to one's marrow, to one's soul.<sup>(13)</sup>

Of these compositions by Villiers nothing is left, unless it be the melodic line of 'La Mort des amants' preserved in musical notation by Judith Gautier : a rather commonplace tune, it must be confessed, only just saved by a modulation which for its time is unexpected and daring.<sup>(14)</sup>

Nothing more remains of all that music about which the contemporaries spoke with such warmth. Villiers was, we learn, incapable of writing it down himself. He more than once consulted Emmanuel Chabrier, who was one of his friends from 1867 onwards, on the subject. It has been said that Chabrier avoided to comply with the writer's requests to note down his music ; according to other reports Chabrier had, we are assured, shown the greatest readiness that could have been desired, and Villiers de l'Isle Adam's unpunctuality in keeping his appointments was the only reason why these requests were never carried out. The second version is no doubt the true one, for in 1883 Villiers de l'Isle Adam inscribed a copy of the 'Contes cruels' with the following dedication to the composer : *A mon ami Emmanuel Chabrier, son apprenti-musicien de bonne volonté et son cordial admirateur, Villiers de l'Isle Adam.*<sup>(15)</sup>

Although opportunities to publish his literary work became more and more favourable from this time on, he had by no means lost his taste for music. This is shown, for instance, by an account of an evening with friends during which Villiers sat down at the piano and sang through nearly the whole score of 'Lohengrin'<sup>(16)</sup>, or by the following letter from J. K. Huysmans, who had already in 1883

<sup>(13)</sup> Letter from Émile Blémont to Fernand Clerget in the latter's book, 'Villiers de l'Isle Adam' (Louis Michaud, Paris).

<sup>(14)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(15)</sup> René Martineau, 'Emmanuel Chabrier' (Dorbon ainé, Paris, 1910).

<sup>(16)</sup> Edmond Bailly, 'Poètes mélomanes'. ('Ermitage', September 15th 1892).

paid his tribute to Villiers de l'Isle Adam in '*À Rebours*' :

I well remember a 14th of July, when he came to Montrouge to dine with Lucien Descaves's father. After the meal he went to the piano and, lost to the world, sang pieces by Wagner with his frail, cracked voice.<sup>(17)</sup>

or, again, by one of his listeners, Kowalski, who reports that one night at a students' gathering Villiers improvised a 'Jupiter' symphony of a decidedly Wagnerian character,<sup>(18)</sup> and yet again by one of the young admirers of his last years, Victor-Émile Michelet, who died quite recently, and who left us this impression :

I am bound to say that no singer ever made me understand the delicious song from '*Lohengrin*', 'Belovèd Swan . . .', so thoroughly as Villiers, when he sang it at a grand piano by Paepe he had kept through all his painful adventures. . . . He was an inspired interpreter of the music he loved, although a wholly unprofessional performer.<sup>(19)</sup>

It is true that none of these testimonies comes from a professional musician ; but without trying to pronounce judgment on musical inventions of which we know nothing, and probably never shall know anything, we are justified by the fact that at the piano Villiers de l'Isle Adam knew how to hold the attention at least of non-musical listeners in deducing that as a performer he must have possessed a certain power of incantation, the more so because—all the evidence agrees on that point as well as with the writer's "Wagnerism"—as music-lover, improviser and performer he never regarded music as a frivolous diversion.

The author of '*Isis*' having been Baudelaire's friend at the moment the latter turned his penetrating gaze towards Wagner's theories and achievements, who knows whether such musical knowledge as he possessed did not have its share in consolidating the intuitions of the poet of '*Les Fleurs du mal*' ? And at this same moment a young poet who had no natural inclination towards music, but who was aware of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's greatness and of the assurance of his views, escorts him, follows him and listens to him with all his ear : Catulle Mendès, indeed, made himself his inseparable companion during the first years of the younger man's career, and about 1864 they lived together. Mendès could have missed none of Villiers's sumptuous verbal and musical improvisations, and it was under the latter's auspices that Mendès and Judith Gautier paid their first visit to Triebschen. By the time the second

<sup>(17)</sup> Letter from J. K. Huysmans, dated April 21st 1892, to R. du Pontavice de Heusey, quoted in the latter's work.

<sup>(18)</sup> Reprinted in '*La République française*' in 1907.

<sup>(19)</sup> Victor-Émile Michelet, '*Figures d'évocateurs*' (Eug. Figuière, Paris, 1913.)

visit took place, Mendès was full to bursting of Wagnerism, as a rather extravagant unpublished letter addressed to a friend and dated May 25th 1870 shows, the friend, then a professor of English at Avignon and already a rare poet and subtle thinker, being no other than Stéphane Mallarmé :

One thing revives and consoles : admiration. From that alone comes true joy. Hugo and Leconte de Lisle save us and keep us alive, and thanks to Richard Wagner I have known infinite delight. Knowing you as I believe I do know you, I give myself a treat by initiating you into the new art—which is neither poetry nor music, yet at the same time both music and poetry—created by Richard Wagner. That man—if the name may be applied to a hyper-divine nature—is truly at one and the same time a precursor and a redeemer. He both prophesies and accomplishes. Unknown horizons full of delicious precipices will reveal themselves to you the day your eyes are opened to this new light. Richard Wagner has invented a sun ! None of the sensations and sentiments provoked by the manifestations of no matter what art is comparable, either by its profundity, its charm or even its despair, to the ecstasy of the initiated who hears Wagner's orchestra think and speak, his forehead in his hands, and I repeat to you, this is not music, for should I, a poet, trouble myself about music ?

This was very probably the first appeal Wagner's work made to the author of 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune', who was fifteen years later to write his 'Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français'. Settled in Paris at the end of 1871, Stéphane Mallarmé assiduously attended concerts and saw Villiers de l'Isle Adam as often as the periodical eclipses of "that old fugitive" (*« vieux fugace »*), as he called him, permitted. Linked of old by a profound reciprocal affection as they were, and by a common disdain of convention and base popularity, they could not but see Wagner's personality and work rise before them impressively at a time these were known and admired in France by no more than a handful of people, but had been for more than twenty years the object of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's ardent enthusiasm.

\*     \*     \*

The musicians themselves made him but a niggardly return for the affection he lavished on their art. The first three poems of the 'Conte d'amour', which appears in the 'Contes cruels', have been set to music, and very worthily indeed : 'Éblouissement' (under the title of 'Nocturne') and 'Les Présents' by Gabriel Fauré in 1886 and 1887, and 'L'Aveu' by Ernest Chausson in the latter year. Of the last three, 'Réveil', 'Adieu' and 'Rencontre', only 'Adieu' has, so far as I am aware, attracted a musician—Emile

Nérini.<sup>(20)</sup> When Villiers de l'Isle Adam's drama 'Le Nouveau Monde' appeared in 1880, the following note was to be read at the end of the preface : "The orchestral and vocal scores of this drama have been composed". No composer's name, however, is indicated. We know from M. Marcel Longuet that Villiers had at first thought of a musician named Henry Ghys in this connection, a friend to whom he had dedicated 'L'Affichage céleste' in the 'Contes cruels'. Had this incidental music been sketched far enough by Henry Ghys for Villiers to regard it as finished, or did the latter take his own wish for an accomplished fact? We do not know. The truth is that when the play was produced at the Théâtre des Nations in 1883, after many vicissitudes, the incidental music was by a young composer named Alexandre Georges, who later on made something of a name for himself by his settings of Richepin's 'Chansons de Miarka'.

Everything points to the supposition that Villiers de l'Isle Adam entered into negotiations with Alexandre Georges through the intermediary of the Comte d'Osmoy, whose secretary the musician then was. The count was a friend of Flaubert's, with whom he collaborated in 'Le Château des coeurs'. Villiers knew and admired Flaubert, and a little later he dedicated his admirable tale 'Vera' "to Madame d'Osmoy", which leads us to suppose that he must have had friendly relations with d'Osmoy and his family. It was doubtless in this way that Alexandre Georges became the musical collaborator in that dramatic work.

Naturally enough he was again associated with Villiers in 'Axel'. We know that this play appeared in book form only posthumously, and it was not produced until February 1894, at the Théâtre de la Gaieté. An article that is contemporary with these performances gives details of this collaboration :

Villiers, who had no end of an admiration for Alexandre Georges and was already indebted to him for the music for 'Le Nouveau Monde', had often discussed with the young master that which he desired him to write for 'Axel'. The first part, which interested them particularly, had even been the subject for a mutual agreement in the matter both of music and of stagecraft.<sup>(21)</sup>

This score contains, in its arrangement for piano, a 'Prélude Offertoire : chœur des religieuses' with a solo for sister Aloyse, a Hymn, a 'Noël', a duel scene, a prelude for part IV, a 'Chœur des vieux serviteurs' and a finale.<sup>(22)</sup>

<sup>(20)</sup> Gabriel Fauré, 'Nocturne', Op. 43 (Hamelle, Paris, 1886); 'Les Présents', Op. 46 (same publisher, 1887). Ernest Chausson, 'L'Aveu', Op. 13, in a set entitled 'Quatre Mélodies' (same publisher, 1887). Émile Nérini, 'Adieu' (Gilles, Paris).

<sup>(21)</sup> Fernand Depas, 'Revue encyclopédique', April 15th 1894, p. 126.

<sup>(22)</sup> 'Axel : réduction d'orchestre' (Rouart Lerolle, Paris).

About 1886—that is to say shortly after the fragmentary publication of 'Axel' in 'La Jeune France'—Vincent d'Indy, attracted by the beauty of the play, thought of turning it into a musical work. He is said to have been occupied with it for a fairly long time and to have given it up only in favour of 'Fervaal'. Perhaps the understanding between Villiers de l'Isle Adam and Alexandre Georges caused him to abandon his earlier plans.

In 1913, requested by M. Jacques Rouché to write an opera to follow up the success of 'Le Festin de l'araignée' at the Théâtre des Arts, Albert Roussel thought of 'Akédyssérl' ; but, that subject having been reserved for M. Trémisot, who had already sketched out a prelude, Roussel fell back on 'Padmâvati'.<sup>(22)</sup>

Lastly a modest tribute, but one that must not be forgotten, since it came from a Villiers enthusiast of long standing, was a piano piece by Ricardo Vifès entitled 'Crinoline', reproduced in facsimile in the 'Hommage à Léon-Paul Fargue'. It has for its motto a quotation from the opening of 'Amour suprême' : "En ce moment même, d'harmonieuses mélodies du bal nous parvinrent plus distinctes . . ." <sup>(23)</sup>

However few the visible links connecting Villiers de l'Isle Adam with music may seem to be to-day, the fact nevertheless remains that among the great French writers he was the one who showed the greatest enthusiasm for that art and who took it most seriously. It is fitting that he should be given a place of honour in the history of Wagnerism, although so far this duty has been neglected, and also in that succession of poets particularly interested in music which has appeared in France without interruption since the middle of last century.

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The reader may be reminded here that among the works by Villiers de l'Isle Adam which have appeared in English the 'Contes cruels' were published under the title of 'Sardonic Tales' (Knopf, New York, 1927) ; that the drama, 'Axel', appeared in that language (Jarrolds, London, 1925) ; that Mrs. Therese Barclay published an excellent version of the one-act plays, 'Revolt' and 'Escape', in Johnson & Erichsen's 'Modern Plays' (1898) ; and that on the subject of Villiers de l'Isle Adam in general the remarkable essays by Arthur Symons in 'The Symbolist Movement in Literature' and in 'Figures of Several Centuries' may always be read with profit, as well as James Huneker's in 'Iconoclasts', not to mention the short study by Arnold Bennett in 'Books and Persons'.

<sup>(22)</sup> Arthur Hoérée, 'Albert Roussel' (Rieder, Paris, 1938).

<sup>(23)</sup> 'Les Feuilles libres', No. 45-6, June 1927, pp. 167-70.

and were surprised at his "brilliant, clear, full, or velvety" voice—concluding a hurried judgment that he sounded like a "little boy in a woman's dress". In 1863 he submitted two pieces of music to a competition for young composers, and

## BIZET'S ADMIRERS AND DETRACTORS

BY JOHN W. KLEIN

ON the occasion of Bizet's centenary,<sup>(1)</sup> it may be of some interest to draw attention to the extraordinary diversity of critical opinion with regard to his work. His critics may be roughly divided into two sections: those who consider him a charming, but quite definitely minor composer, and those who are convinced that he is one of the two or three greatest French musicians of all time.

During his lifetime Bizet met with singularly little appreciation. His work was consistently ignored and belittled. His last months were embittered by an almost incredible lack of understanding. He was not only occasionally but repeatedly denounced as a too scholarly musician completely lacking in spontaneity and incapable of writing a simple melody. For a man of Bizet's fairly easy-going temperament this atmosphere of persistent and frequently malevolent denigration was little short of deadly; it explains, to some extent, the comparative slenderness of his output.

The first to recognize his talent was Hector Berlioz, who devoted the last musical *feuilleton* he ever wrote to Bizet's 'The Pearl Fishers', produced in 1863. Berlioz lays particular stress on Bizet's fire and originality; with uncanny insight he calls attention to the little dance at the opening of the first act and praises its exceptional verve and exuberance. Some critics have considered Berlioz's praise excessive; they have even ventured to affirm that it was not altogether disinterested, but an attempt to curry favour with the management of the Théâtre Lyrique, which was about to produce his 'Les Troyens' after interminable delays and inexcusable mutilations. But Berlioz was, on the whole, no time-server; he had an undeniable admiration for his youthful contemporary, and his article has an unmistakable ring of sincerity. Besides, he does not hesitate to express his censure and he justifiably—and fairly ruthlessly—condemns the finale of the first act. "It is of a vulgarity that is no longer permissible nowadays", he remarks trenchantly. He was quick to notice that Bizet did not always make the best use of his splendid gifts, but then the composer of 'Carmen' (who had

<sup>(1)</sup> Georges Bizet was born in Paris on October 25th 1838.

generally to deal with pampered and overbearing vocalists) habitually, and perhaps excusably, preferred a performance—however imperfect—of one of his works to no performance at all. He was never one of those rare artists who speak about the indignity and infamy of compromise and resolutely insist on everything or nothing. This is, indeed, a problem which confronts practically every young dramatist or composer, and it is sad to think that he is afterwards ruthlessly taken to task for concessions forced upon him by others, who are generally too influential and powerful for him to resist.

The following years were years of increasing estrangement between Bizet and the critics. The disconcerting accusation of Wagnerism, which was so repeatedly levelled against him, appears to us nowadays very superficial and even ludicrous, but it is well to remember that it was meant seriously at the time and that it was a real source of constant annoyance and irritation to Bizet. (After all, in the years immediately following the Franco-Prussian war Wagner was the best-hated man in France after Bismarck.) Even so exceptionally discerning a critic as Ernest Reyer comments on the curious similarity between Wagner's 'Meistersinger' and Bizet's 'Djamiléh'!

Yet Reyer had a particularly sound instinct for genius and a really genuine understanding of Bizet. At the very outset he had praised the "delicate and exquisite melancholy" of the great duet in 'The Pearl Fishers', and—though he disapproved of Bizet's "eclecticism", *viz.* opportunism in 'The Fair Maid of Perth'—he always had a steadfast belief in the greatness of his destiny. So he devoted a singularly lengthy and sympathetic article to 'Djamiléh', which was after all only a one-act opera serving as a curtain-raiser. But it was, in Reyer's own words, "a delicate, distinguished, essentially poetic work", a regular "opera for gourmets", one not likely to be appreciated by the multitude. Saint-Saëns was blunter still; in a delightful little sonnet he referred to 'Djamiléh' as "une perle aux pourceaux jetée".

Reyer was even more enthusiastic about 'L'Arlésienne'. It was, in his opinion, a striking revelation of Bizet's genius. This almost shy, plaintive music, which had been so callously submerged by the usual buzz of entr'acte conversation, was certainly not the work of an opportunist. At a time when Bizet was almost completely unknown and unappreciated (only two music critics had been present at the *première* of 'L'Arlésienne') Reyer alone prophesied that his young *confrère* was destined to become "one of the masters of French music". He had even the courage and the vision to write: "Any musician, however eminent, might be proud of having composed such music".

Reyer has been highly—and rightly—praised for the prophetic words with which he concluded his article on 'Carmen' after the deplorable first-night fiasco : "But 'Carmen' is not dead!" Yet whoever reads the article in question with the care it deserves (for it happens to have been the only sensible review written on that historic occasion) cannot fail to notice a curious listlessness. Reyer was disappointed. He was too acute and discerning a critic to belittle Bizet's last work, but all the same he had expected more from the composer of 'Djamileh' and 'L'Arlésienne'. It seemed to him that Bizet—in a fit of understandable discouragement—had resumed his old policy of trying to please everybody. The new work with its *habaneras* and *toreador* songs was obviously no longer "caviare to the general", as 'Djamileh' had been ; it was, in fact, a last feverish bid for popularity and success. Reyer's tone becomes slightly perfunctory, perhaps just a trifle condescending. He completely failed to notice or appreciate the new power Bizet had acquired. After Bizet's death he no longer makes any secret of his predilection. "'L'Arlésienne' is Bizet's masterpiece", he remarks.

Reyer's preference for 'L'Arlésienne' has been shared by many eminent French critics. Paul Landormy in his 'History of Music' affirms : "'L'Arlésienne' is a masterpiece of the first order ; never again perhaps did Bizet attain equal perfection. 'L'Arlésienne' has more depth and poignancy than 'Carmen'". Camille Bellaigue in his singularly eloquent article on Bizet (published in 'La Revue des deux Mondes' in October 1889) reserves his most enthusiastic praise for this simple and moving idyll of Provençal life (which he considers the high-water mark of Bizet's whole achievement), whilst Romain Rolland proclaims it an unsurpassable masterpiece of its *genre*. Even Gauthier-Villars, whose biography of Bizet is consistently derogatory and even hostile, and who has not a single word of praise for 'Carmen', refers admiringly to this "delicate and excellent music".

However, there can be little doubt that 'Carmen' is Bizet's greatest and most compelling—if not his most subtle or sensitive—work. It is, indeed, almost entirely due to 'Carmen' that Bizet has won his after all unique position in the history of French music and French opera.

What had delighted Bizet most of all in the reviews of his one-act opera 'Djamileh' was the fact that he had been "taken seriously". He had no such consolation after the first performance of 'Carmen'. The reviews are melancholy reading ; the great majority of the critics were not merely indifferent ; their comments were singularly acid, if not positively insulting. Bizet was taken

to task for not imitating Auber and Adolphe Adam ! His music was denounced as wholly lacking in the spontaneity and melodic fertility of those "inspired" masters. The final duet—unquestionably one of the most gripping and moving pages in the whole of dramatic music—passed completely unnoticed. Bizet might well feel discouraged and embittered. The attitude of his most intimate friends was distinctly reserved. To make things worse, that intractable critic, Adolphe Jullien, declared that Bizet had deliberately pandered to the lowest passions of the multitude without even succeeding in winning their applause, that of his own free-will he had written "a vulgar *opéra-comique* ending in an inexplicable murder", that he had ignominiously renounced the high aspirations embodied in his early works ! One rubs one's eyes ; is it possible that any enlightened critic (and Jullien was a man of unusual culture) could have imagined that 'Carmen' was a *pas en arrière* after 'The Pearl Fishers' and 'The Fair Maid of Perth', or even after 'Djamileh'? In spite of all these damning verdicts, 'Carmen', however, continued to run ; what really kept it going was—to a large extent—the widely spread rumour that no more immoral subject had ever been staged at the Opéra-Comique before.

Bizet could scarcely foresee that the tide was just about to turn, that before the year was out three of the greatest composers in Europe would be counted among his admirers : Wagner, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Perhaps he had an inkling of the inevitable return of common sense. The day before his death he signed a contract with the Viennese Imperial Opera for the production of 'Carmen'.

The first man of genius to recognize Bizet at his true value was undoubtedly Tchaikovsky. A pupil of his, Vladimir Shilovsky, had been present at the first performance of 'Carmen' and immediately sent him the score. In the late autumn of 1875 Tchaikovsky came to Paris with his brother Modeste. 'Carmen' was dragging out a miserable existence at the Opéra-Comique and was just on the point of disappearing from the repertory for no fewer than eight years. Modeste Tchaikovsky declares that his brother was in a state of intense nervous excitement after the performance of 'Carmen'. "Peter Ilitch has never been so completely carried away by any piece of modern music as by 'Carmen'", he writes. He adds that the news of Bizet's death tended to increase his brother's almost unhealthy passion for the opera. (Something similar occurred in the case of Nietzsche.<sup>(1)</sup>) Tchaikovsky's admiration for Bizet steadily grew. Five years later he wrote that 'Carmen' was "a

<sup>(1)</sup> A study of Nietzsche's attitude towards Bizet by Dr. Klein appeared in 'The Musical Quarterly', New York, October 1925.—Ed.

masterpiece in the most complete sense of the word ; one of those rare works which will some day most vividly reflect the aspirations of a whole generation. What a wonderful subject ! " he adds. " I am convinced that ten years hence ' Carmen ' will be the most popular opera in the world."

Tchaikovsky's enthusiasm never waned. He never tired of a music that is " so fascinating in its simplicity, so full of vitality, so sincere " that he remembered every note of it. He regarded Bizet as " *of course* head and shoulders above his French contemporaries ", and even preferred him—as Mr. Gerald Abraham in a tone of shocked remonstrance remarks—to his " infinitely greater German contemporary, Wagner ". In more recent times Tchaikovsky's opinions have been echoed by no less modernist a composer than Stravinsky, who in answer to a question as to the French composers he most admired replied : " Bizet and Chabrier ".

The next man of genius to realize the true significance of Bizet's work was Wagner himself. He was present at a performance of ' Carmen ' in Vienna in November 1875. He is credited with the remark, made at the end of the performance : " Thank God, here at last is somebody who has imagination." Hans von Bülow writes : " Wagner and Brahms vied with each other in extolling Bizet's masterpiece ". No contemporary opera produced so deep an impression on the ageing composer as ' Carmen '. He regarded it as the starting-point of a renaissance of French dramatic music, revitalized by popular song. It is interesting to note that his favourite piece was the Micaëla-Don José duet—which is generally regarded as the most conventional number in the whole opera. He delighted in José's phrase " Ma mère, je la vois ", " the fresh naivety " of which he considered perfectly entrancing, and which the pianist Joseph Rubinstein frequently played to him at his request.

Even more enthusiastic than Wagner was Brahms. His intense admiration for ' Carmen ' was a matter of common knowledge, even before Andrew de Ternant revealed the details of Debussy's visit to the German master. According to Debussy, Brahms regarded ' Carmen ' as " undoubtedly the greatest opera produced in Europe since the Franco-Prussian war ". He bitterly regretted that he had never met Bizet and declared that " he would have gone to the end of the earth to embrace the composer of ' Carmen ' ". He rightly deplored the regrettable spirit (redolent of the music-hall) in which ' Carmen ' is generally produced and performed. The whole work was inexcusably degraded to the level of a tragical operetta by the habit—so prevalent in every country—of representing Carmen as " the low-bred follower of Spanish soldiers ",

instead of as "a bewitching, cultured woman of Bizet's own nationality". (There is, indeed, no justification whatever for Don José's exquisite "Flower Song" if Carmen is merely represented—as is so frequently done—as a vulgar harridan.)

Brahms subsequently insisted on taking Debussy to a performance of 'Carmen', and during the intervals delivered "quite a commentary-lecture on the principal numbers". He informed Debussy that he had witnessed no fewer than twenty-one performances, and that his admiration was shared by the Iron Chancellor Bismarck, who had attended no fewer than twenty-seven! These particulars must have been gratifying to the young French musician, whose fervent admiration for Bizet never wavered, despite the depreciatory remarks of the Debussystes.

During the years 1878 to 1883 a wave of enthusiasm for Bizet's masterpiece swept over all Europe with the exception of France. It is perhaps difficult for us nowadays—when it is customary to rank 'Carmen' with Flotow's 'Martha' and Ambroise Thomas's 'Mignon'—to realize the ardour, no less than the extent, of this enthusiasm. No opera had ever appealed so forcibly both to the man in the street and to the most cultured and fastidious of musicians. August Bungert (the creator of a pretentious trilogy based on the Homeric poems and once regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Wagnerian school) considered the orchestration of 'Carmen' "truly extraordinary, exceptionally subtle". The unparalleled popularity of Bizet's masterpiece in Germany began to awaken the anxiety of the Wagnerians, and—if we are to believe the testimony of Gersdorff and Nietzsche—of Wagner himself. Even Wagnerians of long standing, such as Hans von Bülow, completely succumbed to Bizet's spell. "Heavenly music", Bülow wrote after seeing 'Carmen' in London in 1879. He termed Bizet's masterpiece his *Leiblieblingsoper* and insisted on conducting it whenever he toured Germany. "I cannot tell you how much I admire this bewitching music", he wrote to a friend. He had, however, little appreciation for Bizet's early works. He loathed 'The Pearl Fishers', which he contemptuously termed "a tragical operetta", and he coarsely refers to the 'Roma' Symphony as "eine Schweinerei". It puzzled him how the inspired creator of 'Carmen' and 'L'Arlésienne' could have stooped to write "such stuff". He once delighted Sir Alexander Mackenzie by remarking that his opera 'Colomba' reminded him of 'Carmen', but after a second perusal of Mackenzie's work he came to the conclusion that it was a great pity Bizet had died so young.

It is interesting to note that even so harsh and often aggressive

a critic as Hugo Wolf had a deep and lasting admiration for Bizet. He regarded him as the greatest French composer since the death of Berlioz ; he missed no opportunity of seeing a work of his. But it was the Bizet of 'Djamileh' and 'L'Arlésienne', the delicate, profoundly melancholy musician, not the vivacious and exuberant composer of 'Carmen', who appealed most forcibly to him. As for 'L'Arlésienne', he cannot praise this "exquisitely captivating music" highly enough.

The most eloquent and devoted of Bizet's admirers was no doubt the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The story of his conversion to Bizet's Mediterranean art is too well-known to need recapitulation here. In recent years, however, ill-informed critics (mostly admirers of Wagner) have not hesitated to insinuate that Nietzsche's passionate admiration for Bizet was merely a pose and that the philosopher set up the composer of 'Carmen' as a man of straw with the sole purpose of making his ex-hero ridiculous. A cursory glance at Nietzsche's correspondence would have sufficed to convince even the most obtuse and superficial of critics that Nietzsche's admiration for Bizet was one of the strongest and most enduring passions of his life, more genuine perhaps—in some respects—than even his previous infatuation with Wagner. Bizet's music ended by becoming a vital necessity for the ailing philosopher. It is not for nothing that he makes the melancholy confession : "Bizet's orchestration is practically the only one I can endure nowadays". He celebrated in 'Carmen' the return to nature, health and high spirits, and Bizet's simple and vital music happened at that time to be the only music that could still help and stimulate him. It was precisely this which made him so profoundly grateful. It is accordingly disconcerting enough to hear Bernard Shaw expressing amazement and disapproval that Nietzsche should have preferred 'Carmen' to—Beethoven's 'Fidelio' !

On the whole, one must admit that nowhere has the admiration for Bizet been so genuine and whole-hearted as in Germany. With the notable exception of Sir Thomas Beecham, German conductors such as Hans von Bülow, Felix Mottl and Weingartner have been Bizet's most ardent champions. A German critic, Adolf Weissmann, has written by far the most sensitive and exquisite biography of Bizet in existence. It is, moreover, of interest to note that 'Carmen' overcame even the hatreds of the great war and was the only French opera to be produced in Germany during that period. Even recent attempts to ban the work for racial reasons have fortunately ignominiously failed. But the very fact of their failure in times such as these reveals the extraordinary solidity of Bizet's popularity.

Strange and incomprehensible though it may appear, Bizet has met with far less appreciation in his own country. It is almost as though the French had resented the discovery of his genius by foreigners and had borne him a grudge for it ever since. Henry Gauthier-Villars's vitriolic study of the composer is an amazing instance of a biographer whose attitude towards his subject is consistently and ruthlessly hostile. The fact that Bizet made regrettable—if unavailing—concessions in the hope of achieving a popular success is surely no excuse for branding him as an inveterate and singularly ignoble opportunist. It is true that the Bizet of Gauthier-Villars's biography is a man of great potential genius, but he is also a sensation-monger who unhesitatingly sacrifices everything—including his genius—to his frantic desire to attain the *succès d'argent* of his dreams. In Gauthier-Villars's opinion 'Carmen' is nothing but a series of unworthy and useless concessions on the part of a composer completely lacking in artistic integrity; it is merely a very conventional French *opéra-comique* without the least novelty or originality. This is so manifestly an exaggeration that one lays aside this biography with a feeling of dejection; I can think of nothing to compare with it except Jeaffreson's lengthy two-volume biography of Shelley, in which the poet's most trivial indiscretions are ruthlessly underlined. In the same spirit Gauthier-Villars cannot forgive the nineteen-year-old Bizet for having written to his mother—no doubt in a moment of typically juvenile cynicism: "I have less talent than Gounod and less settled convictions. Nowadays that is an added chance of success." No doubt the sentiment expressed is not admirable, but Gauthier-Villars regards it as characteristic of Bizet's whole mental outlook and conveniently overlooks the fact that the youthful composer—who considers himself so inferior to Gounod—reveals a becoming modesty which subsequent achievements scarcely justified. (Bizet's modesty occasionally verges on the ludicrous: he regarded himself as inferior not only to Massenet and Ambroise Thomas, but also to Ernest Guiraud !)

It would be futile to deny that Gauthier-Villars's bitter—yet ably written—biography has exercised a considerable influence on French musical opinion. Before Gauthier-Villars, Bizet had been regarded as a pioneer and innovator crucified by the injustice and lack of vision of his generation; one who—though surrounded by the worst examples—had fought manfully for the regeneration of the French musical drama. Now critics began to belittle both his character and achievements. Jean-Aubry in his 'French Music of To-day' scarcely considers him worthy to defend and represent the French tradition in the eyes of foreigners and remarks scathingly:

" His recently published correspondence places him in a not very favourable light ". This attitude is also adopted by so discerning a critic as Paul Landormy, who in his biography of Bizet represents the composer as a man of mediocre intellect and completely lacking in ideals. Landormy quotes long passages from one of Bizet's most brilliant letters—a letter in which the exuberant spirit of the ' Carmen ' music seems to flash out—and then remarks sourly that it is all very lively, but completely lacking in originality and significance. But to do Landormy justice, he is fully aware of Bizet's genius, and the chapter he devotes to ' Carmen ' is a model of sympathetic and discriminating criticism. We can even forgive him occasional lapses such as this exaggerated statement : " The prelude to the third act is a real *blot* on the score of ' Carmen ' ". But then even such a fervent admirer as Raoul Laparra—in his fascinating booklet on ' Bizet et l'Espagne '—expresses his opinion that the exquisite and profoundly moving " Flower Song "—unquestionably one of the most perfect things Bizet ever wrote—is one of the weakest numbers in the whole opera.

The momentary aberrations of sincere enthusiasts can be more readily understood and forgiven than such biased statements as Jean Cocteau's " Nietzsche praised in ' Carmen ' the crudity that the present generation finds in the music-hall ". It is surely not Bizet's fault if ' Carmen ' is frequently performed in a music-hall spirit. Both Brahms and Hans von Bülow had already deprecated this tendency ; and it should be remembered that the vulgarity and crudity we so often deplore are in the minds and in the acting of the performers, and not in Bizet's music, as Cocteau unjustifiably imagines.

It must be admitted that fanatical Debussyists have been foremost in their attacks on Bizet, but it is well to remember that the master himself never shared their opinions. How highly he thought of Bizet can be seen in his musical *feuilletons*. He regarded Bizet's early death as the greatest disaster which had befallen French music in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He fully realized that there was no one of equal capacity to take Bizet's place and he picturesquely compares French music after the tragic death of the great composer to " a pretty widow, who having no one at hand sufficiently steady to guide her, allows herself to fall into the arms of strangers who maltreat her ".

Even more enthusiastic than Debussy is that most erudite and imaginative of critics, Romain Rolland. For him Debussy's art does not entirely represent French genius ; there is quite another side to it, and that side is " heroic action, the intoxication of reason and laughter, the passion for light, the France of Berlioz and Bizet ".

And he adds : " To tell the truth, that is the France I prefer ". And on another occasion he remarks that there is as much dramatic power in ' Carmen ' as in all the repertory of grand opera—surely a tremendous compliment. He considers Bizet the most spontaneous of French musicians. " ' Carmen ' and ' L'Arlésienne ' are masterpieces of the lyrical Latin drama ", he writes. " Their style is luminous, concise and well-defined ; the figures are outlined with incisive precision. The music is full of light and movement, and its popular subject only serves to enhance its aristocratic distinction. By its nature and its clear perception of the spirit of the race it was well in advance of its time ". " And," Rolland concludes sadly, " what a place Bizet might have taken in our art if he had only lived twenty years longer ! "

Italian musicians have undoubtedly been greatly influenced by Bizet, who has been termed the founder of the " veristic " movement, but they have written comparatively little about him. There is no mention of him in Verdi's voluminous correspondence. Puccini admired ' Carmen ', which he termed " the most complete and the most vibrant opera that has been produced in recent years ", and there are traces of Bizet's influence in his earliest works (e.g. ' Edgar '). Busoni, a severe judge, considered ' Carmen ' an almost perfect opera and proclaimed the last act one of the greatest achievements in all music. Bizet's popularity in Italy has always been great ; one has only to read the extremely appreciative, yet discriminating article in the ' Enciclopedia Italiana ' and compare it with the amazingly perfunctory and inaccurate little notice in the ' Encyclopædia Britannica '.

Most English criticism of Bizet has been vitiated by an attitude of condescension, generally reserved for composers of the standing of Ambroise Thomas or Flotow. Cecil Gray in his arresting ' History of Music ' casually refers to ' Carmen ' as a charming little work of slight importance and dogmatically rebukes Nietzsche for having made such a fuss about it. In his ' Listener's History of Music ' Percy Scholes deals so perfunctorily with Bizet that Edwin Evans felt obliged to protest and to draw attention to the valuable element which Bizet certainly represents in modern music and to his great influence. Bernard Shaw, after expressing his horrified amazement at Nietzsche's infatuation for ' Carmen ', summarily disposes of Bizet's masterpiece as " at best, only a flimsily delicate little opera ". (That " at best " is good.) This tendency to belittle Bizet and to treat him as a minor composer is to be encountered even in D. C. Parker's otherwise instructive and painstaking monograph on Bizet. Mr. Parker considers Bizet's early operas of slight value or

importance ; he is continually referring to the composer's limitations or shortcomings and seems to imagine that '*Carmen*' was a kind of lucky accident which nobody could possibly have foreseen on the strength of Bizet's earlier work. It appears to me that Mr. Parker's dogmatic assertion that '*Carmen*' stands "head and shoulders above anything else Bizet produced" is open to criticism ; '*L'Arlésienne*', though admittedly a much slighter work, is unsurpassable in its way. Mr. Parker, indeed, completely fails to realize the slow but gradual and steady progression of Bizet's art. He also confesses that he is not one of those who weep over the "might-have-beens", and that he hesitates "to proclaim that French music lost much by Bizet's early death". This somewhat lukewarm attitude to his subject is at times disconcerting ; but let us hasten to add that Mr. Parker is entitled to the gratitude of all Bizet enthusiasts for having discovered the delightful little Symphony in C major which the composer wrote at the age of seventeen.

Yet Bizet has had enthusiastic admirers even in England. Ernest Newman has not hesitated to term him "one of the supreme musical dramatists of all time" (a distinction to which after all only Gluck, Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and possibly Moussorgsky or Berlioz can lay claim). Frederick Delius revelled in Bizet's music and considered him "the greatest French composer", vastly superior to Debussy, a much more limited artistic personality. A similar opinion has been expressed by Sir Thomas Beecham, to whom we owe exquisite and unforgettable performances of Bizet's unjustly neglected early operas. (In this connection it is only fair to remark that Beecham has done more for Bizet's reputation than any other living conductor.) It is, moreover, not generally known that the late Sir Charles Stanford was an ardent admirer of Bizet, whom he regarded as "a genius of the first order", and the greatest French composer of the nineteenth century. "Bizet", he remarks, "was a musician, not by the strength of his will, like Berlioz, but by the divine grace of God".

Eminent English men of letters have also succumbed to the spell of Bizet's genius. The most notable example is John Galsworthy, whose penultimate work was an original—if somewhat unequal—translation of the '*Carmen*' libretto, which the author hoped would be regarded as a little practical homage to a great artist. The chief fault of this work is its rather laboured attempt to be colloquial ; the old translation by Hersee, however (pompous and bombastic as it occasionally is), succeeds in being more effective, witty and to the point. But Galsworthy's translation of set pieces such as the '*Habañera*', the '*Danse bohémienne*' or Micaëla's song in the

third act is masterly ; the beauty and distinction of his diction is a pleasant relief after the careless, slipshod style of Hersee. On the other hand, his version of the important 'Seguidilla' (with its slangy "too dreadful") tends to coarsen and vulgarize Carmen's character, while his rendering of the famous quintet is lamentably lacking in wit. Even his excellent version of the 'Flower Song' is spoilt by his translating the simple and moving "Et j'étais une chose à toi" by the amazingly conventional "Thou hadst been queen of all my heart". Much of Galsworthy's work is, indeed, curiously stilted and not always practicable from the singer's point of view. However, it must be admitted that he applied himself indefatigably to this most difficult task. It was—in his own words—"a labour of love, in the hope of increasing, if only a little, the ever-fresh enjoyment which wells out of this great, this most dramatic and melodious opera". And he adds : "When one has been working for over a year on the fitting of words to tunes and at the end of that time receives no less pleasure from the music and the theme than at the beginning, then there is essential immortality in both". He once remarked to Hermon Ould "with almost boyish enthusiasm" : "Such a jolly good story, and such perfect tunes". In the preface to his translation he affirms : "The union between Bizet and Mérimée has produced what, to my thinking, is the greatest of all operas".

Galsworthy's enthusiasm for 'Carmen' was shared by Joseph Conrad. Neither of them would hear a word of criticism against Bizet's masterpiece. "It was a vice with both of us", Galsworthy once whimsically remarked, and adds that they were eternally grateful to Nietzsche for having championed 'Carmen' against Wagner.

And so one could go on *ad infinitum*. Men of genius have always been kinder and more appreciative to the hapless composer of 'Carmen' than the professional critics. They at least have never stinted their praise. They instinctively felt that Bizet was no minor or secondary figure, but a great musician, perhaps one of the greatest potential musicians. Like Purcell or Moussorgsky, he never really had a chance of doing justice to the splendid gifts entrusted to him. But one fact remains that no amount of derogatory criticism can induce us to overlook : the extraordinary popularity of 'Carmen' in every part of the world, and with almost every section of musical opinion. Which other work has been praised with equal enthusiasm by eminent musicians as wide apart and as divergent in opinion and ideals as Busoni and Puccini, Brahms and Wagner, Gounod and Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, Stanford and Delius ?

## CONCERNING SOME RECITATIVES IN ‘DON GIOVANNI’

BY ALFRED EINSTEIN

It has often been said, and with truth, that luck was against Mozart when he undertook the second versions of his ‘Nozze di Figaro’ and ‘Don Giovanni’. In his case the rule, which nearly always holds good with other masters, that the final version of a work is as a matter of course the definitive one, does not apply. With ‘Fidelio’, with Schubert’s songs, even—in spite of a disturbing change in style—with ‘Tannhäuser’, we hold to the last revision. Not so with Mozart : there the first version alone shows the creator’s intention at its purest. The indifference with which Mozart sacrificed the original form of ‘Figaro’ and ‘Don Giovanni’ to the caprices of singers is inexplicable : it looks as though these two works, once they had been finished in all their perfection, were nothing more to him after their completion than playthings of theatrical routine and stage necessity. It is hard to understand how, in the Vienna ‘Figaro’ of 1789, he could replace a masterly aria like Susanna’s ‘Venite inginocchiatevi’ by the wholly insignificant arietta, ‘Un moto di gioia’, during the singing of which the Countess and Cherubino had nothing better to do than to become part of the audience ; and it is even more incomprehensible that at the same performance the most magical number of the whole score, Susanna’s ‘Deh vieni non tardar’, was suppressed in favour of the rather colourless aria, ‘Al desio di chi t’adora’.

But Mozart positively ruined the second act of ‘Don Giovanni’ in the Vienna version of 1788. Nothing shall be said against the interpolated aria in the first act, Don Ottavio’s ‘Dalla sua pace’. It is a wonderful piece and may well be sung if Ottavio omits his ‘Il mio tesoro’ in the second act ; its position in Act I is dramatically not altogether unjustified ; and above all it is very short. On the other hand, what happens in Act II of the 1788 version, between Leporello’s escape from the clutches of the quintet of his opponents and the churchyard scene, becomes the more obscure the more one tries to make it clear to oneself.

Zerlina, knife in hand, drags Leporello back on the stage by the

hair, with the aid of a peasant ties him to a chair in spite of his entreaties and cajoleries, and fastens him thus bound to the window-frame. Whereupon the following long duet follows :

LEPORELLO : Per queste tue manine,  
candide e tenerelle,  
per questa fresca pelle,  
abbi pietà di me !

ZERLINA : Non v' è pietà, briccone !  
son' una tigre irata  
un' aspide, un leone ;  
nò, nò, pietà non v' è !

&c.

It seems unlikely that this duet can ever have been sung since the performances of 1788, except, as we shall see in a moment, at the Prague performances of 1801 : it has no true feeling of comedy, much less of tragic-comedy, and musically too it belongs to Mozart's less successful pieces, in spite of some ingenious realistic suggestions.

Two *secco* recitatives follow. Zerlina leaves the room. Leporello implores the peasant, who has remained behind, to bring him some water, doubtless in order to have his hands freed for the purpose of drinking ; but the peasant departs with a grin. Leporello vainly tries to loosen his fetters by himself and, tugging violently at the rope that ties him to the window-frame, he pulls it out of the wall and escapes, with the chair clinging to his posterior and dragging the cross-bars after him. When Zerlina returns with Donna Elvira, she finds that the bird has flown. Elvira is of opinion that he must have been saved by his infamous master ; Zerlina agrees and goes in search of Don Ottavio, to inform him of this latest accident and incite him to vengeance ; and Elvira, without more ado, begins her *recitativo accompagnato*, 'In quali eccessi, o numi', followed by her new aria, the most widely known of all these interpolated numbers : 'Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata'.

Quite apart from the fact that the whole succession of these scenes is merely episodic and quite superfluous—for why should Leporello be made to escape twice?—indeed harmful, since it simply prolongs all this byplay from the opening of Act II to the churchyard scene without adding to the *musical* value of the whole, it is obvious that there is something missing here. Elvira's great scene remains unaccounted for, since it is inconceivable that she could have been so profoundly agitated by Leporello's second escape. Now if we glance at the libretto of 1788, we find that as a matter of fact the recitative that prepares Elvira's scene takes a completely different form. I shall quote the passage as it stands :—

## SCENA XIII

ZERLINA, D.ELVIRA, poi MASETTO con due Contadini.

ZERL. : Andiam andiam Signora,  
Vedrete in qual maniera  
Ho concio il scellerato.

D.ELV. : Ah sopra lui  
Si sfoghi il mio furor.

ZERL. : Stelle ! in qual modo  
Si salvò quel briccone ?

MAS. : No non si trova  
Un' anima più nera.

ZERL. : Ah Masetto, Masetto  
Dove fosti finor ?

MAS. : Un' infelice  
Volle il ciel ch' io salvassi.  
Era io sol pochi passi  
Lontan da te, quando gridare io sento  
Nell' opposto sentiero :  
Con lor v' accorro, veggio  
Una donna che piange,  
Ed un uom che fugge : vo inseguirlo,  
Mi sparisce dagli occhi,  
Ma da quel che mi disse la fanciulla,  
Ai tratti, alle sembianze, alle maniere  
Lo credo quel briccon del Cavaliere.

ZERL. : E' desso senza fallo : anche di questo  
Informiam Don Ottavio : a lui si aspetta  
Far per noi tutti o domandar vendetta.  
*(partono).*

## SCENA XIV

D.ELVIRA sola

In quali eccessi, . . . &amp;c.

Here we have a perfectly plausible justification for Donna Elvira's scene. Zerlina indignantly asks Masetto, who has just arrived, where on earth he has been, and Masetto explains his absence by relating a new offence on the part of Don Giovanni he has just witnessed : it had pleased Heaven that he should intrude upon the villain's latest attack upon an innocent girl and save her. This story, which shows a new and more serious side of Masetto, is the transition from the comic scene between Zerlina and Leporello to Elvira's tragic outburst. Elvira is horrified at this new link in the endless chain of her seducer's misdeeds : " In quali eccessi, o

numi, in quai misfatti orribili, tremendi è avvolto il sciagurato ! ” In the aria that follows she complains that, in spite of all, she cannot cease to feel compassion for him, and this in turn prepares for her appearance in the second finale, during the supper scene, which may possibly be regarded as the explanation why Mozart set the whole of this additional scene without too great a reluctance.

The music for Masetto’s narrative has so far remained unknown : to my knowledge it is to be found in none of the old or new scores. But there is in the library of the Istituto musicale in Florence a score (265), once among the effects of the Palazzo Pitti, which exactly reproduces the 1788 Vienna version of ‘*Don Giovanni*’. It is a manuscript from the workshop of the music-dealer Lausch, who had at other times often acted as copyist for Mozart, and there are a hundred indications that his source for this copy was Mozart’s autograph. An appendix to this manuscript moreover contains copies of the complete wind parts, which are no longer extant in the original, and thus proves that the three trombones in the second finale are authentic, although Mozart did not employ them in the overture.

This score contains Masetto’s narrative, and not only that : it contains also the scene in which Leporello tries to break his fetters and takes to his heels, as well as the following scene for Zerlina and Elvira (with Masetto) in a version *hitherto wholly unknown* and, as we shall see, in Mozart’s authentic form. The version known so far is not Mozart’s own ; to put it briefly and bluntly, it is forgery. This has been suspected before now, as for instance by Bernhard Gugler, who says so in his edition of the ‘*Don Giovanni*’ score (Leipzig, 1868), and by myself, as I said in my introduction to Eulenberg’s edition in miniature score (p. xviii). To attribute to Mozart such faulty declamation as that of the word “legò” at the beginning of Leporello’s recitative is impossible :—

LEPORELLO

A musical score for Leoporello's recitative, featuring two staves of music with lyrics in Italian. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are: "A - mi - co, per pi - ta! un pe - co d'a - qua fre - sea e ca'lo mi". The bottom staff continues the musical line with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are: "mo - ro! guar - daun po co - me stret - to mi le - gó l'as - sas - si - na!". The music consists of eighth-note patterns and rests.

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Compare with this the genuine Mozart :—

Ex. 2

LEPORELLO SOLO (*a un verso*)

A-mi-co, per pie-tà! un po-ec d'aqua fre-sea, o ciùo mimo-ro!

guarda un po come stretto mi le-gò l'es-sas-si-nal se po-te-si li-be-ra-mi col

den-ti! oh ven-ga il Diav-o-lo-a di-sfar que-sti grup-pi!

io vo ve-de-re di rom-pe-re la cor-da... Come è forte... pa-u-ra-del-la

mor-te, o tu Mer-cu-rio pro-tet-tor de' lad-ri pro-teggi un gal-an't

uom... cor-ag-gio... bra-vo!... ciel che veg-gio!... non ser-vo,

pria che costei ri - tor - ni bi - so - gnad - ari sprone al - la cal - ca - gna,

stra - sci - nar, so - oc - cor - re u - pa mon - ta - gna.

## SCENA XIII

Zerlina, Donna Elvira, poi Masetto con due Contadini

ZERLINA

Andiam, andiam Signora, Ve - drete in qual maniera Ho conceg - il seel - le -

D. ELV. ZERL.  
- ra - to. Ah so - pra lu - i Si sfo - ghi il mio furor, Stel - lel - in qual

MAS. ZERL.  
mo - do Si salvò quel bretton? No, non si trova Un'a - ni - ma più ne - ra. Ah Ma -

MAS. ZERL.  
- set - to, Ma - set - to Do - ve fo - sti fi - nor? Un' in - fe - li - ce Volle il ciel chiosai

- vas-si. Er-a io sol po-chi pas-si Lon-tan da te, quan-do gri-  
 da-re io sento Nell'op-po-sto sen-tie-ro: Con lor v'ac-cor-ro, veggio U-na  
 don-na che pian-ge, Ed un ue-mo che fug-ge: vo'in-sa-guir-lo  
 Mi spa-ri-seo dagli oc-chi, Ma da quel cheni dis-se la fan-ciul-la, Ai  
 trat-ti, al-le sem-bian-ze al-le ma-ni-ere Lo cre-do quel brie-  
 -con del Ca-va-li-ere! E' des-so sen-za fal-lo: an-ehe di

ZERL.

(Parton Zerlina e Masetto)  
Segue recitativo istromentato di Donna Elvira ed aria.

A careful comparison will show how much simpler and yet more striking and effective is Mozart's treatment of all this. The difference between the conclusions of the second recitative is especially significant. The forger makes baldly for the key of B $\flat$  major with which Elvira's *accompagnato* opens; Mozart closes in D major and so secures the explosion that follows its full force of expression.

But who was the forger? The clues point to Prague. The two spurious recitatives make their earliest appearance in the first full-score edition of 'Don Giovanni', which appeared, printed in set type, at Breitkopf & Härtel's in 1801 (Vol. II, pp. 587-8). The firm of Breitkopf & Härtel, already in those days intent on completeness in its editions, thought fit to print all the supplementary pieces of 1788 in an appendix to their score, although in a haphazard order. The material for this first edition was furnished by Mozart's earliest biographer, Franz Xaver Niemetschek, a professor at the Prague "Gymnasium". A letter from Niemetschek to Gottfried Christoph Härtel, dated February 20th 1801, gives full information. I am indebted for a copy of it to Dr. Wolfgang Schmieder, the keeper of the firm's archives, who kindly acceded to my request to make the necessary investigations. The following extract may be quoted:

Here follows a supplement of recitatives to the two new extra pieces in the second act of 'Don Juan'. My copyist tried to mislead me by assuring me that everything was now complete. But as fortunately this opera was given last week, I went to it in order to convince myself, and found that some recitatives were still missing, which I now send you herewith. I obtained them through a good friend of Guardasoni's. They cost however 1 thaler. So dear is Guardasoni. The 1st, i.e. the 8th scene, follows immediately upon

the great sextet. Scene 9 follows on at once. Next comes Ottavio's aria in G. To that succeeds the 10th scene, which you have already received in an earlier supplement, namely where Zerlina brings back Leporello and ties him up during the duet in C. After the duet Zerlina goes to fetch the other victims, such as Elvira, &c., to show the captured rogue to them. And now follows the 11th scene, in which Leporello tears himself away ; and where, as Zerlina returns with Elvira, they find the place empty. Where, too, Zerlina departs and Elvira sings the 12th scene, i.e. the orchestral recitative with the rondo in E flat, which I sent you the other day. On this follows the scene in front of the statue.

And now you may be sure of having everything as complete as it is produced here. André probably referred to the old original, and thus not to these altered scenes. . . .

In other words, Niemetschek himself had already been deceived, either by the impresario of the Prague opera, Guardasoni, or by the latter's anonymous "good friend". Very likely the genuine recitatives, the omission of which at the Prague performance struck Niemetschek when he made a comparison with the Vienna libretto, were not found ready to hand, so that they were quickly composed afresh to satisfy the agreeable and highly-esteemed professor—for who cared what mere recitatives were like ? A well-meant little swindle of that kind was no great matter in those days. And so it came about that for nearly a hundred and forty years the score of 'Don Giovanni' has contained two spurious recitatives. It does not seem too soon to replace them by the authentic ones.

## AN OXFORD COLLECTION OF MENDELSSOHNIANA

BY ERNEST WALKER

In a recent review in these columns of Sir Donald Tovey's analytical essays on choral music<sup>(1)</sup> I mentioned an interesting detail in Mendelssohn's annotated conducting score of 'Israel in Egypt'. This volume is part of a large and valuable collection of Mendelssohniana to which I have been allowed access by the kind permission of its owner, Miss Margaret Deneke, Honorary Fellow and Choirmaster of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford; and it is with her consent that the present article is written.

The collection, very diverse in scope, was until recently the property of two of the composer's grand-children. It includes autograph music, published and unpublished; many pocket-books full of drawings, fragments of music and miscellaneous memoranda; boyish notebooks on mathematics and history and Swiss travel; reports on the pupils of the Leipzig Conservatorium and on the proceedings of the "Gewandhaus" concerts; a great mass of printed and manuscript music from Mendelssohn's library; autograph documents connected with his official life and drafts of oratorio libretti; and between seven and eight thousand private letters addressed to him, all carefully arranged by their recipient in chronological volumes.

To turn first to the autograph music. The pocket-books are full of fragments, averaging eight or ten bars in length, the great majority of which were never, so far as I am aware, embodied in a finished composition. Two of the fragments are considerably longer than the rest; one is the single-line start of a symphony in B minor, the other a draft—differing from the printed music only in a few details, apart from various erasures—of all the salient material of the great scherzo of the F minor string Quartet, Mendelssohn's last completed work on an important scale. Though, perhaps, in some respects more technically effective as a piano solo than in its original form, this movement has always seemed to me

<sup>(1)</sup> Vol. XIX, No. 2, April 1938, p. 216.

to have a very good claim to rank as its composer's emotional masterpiece, with its continual urge of deep but restrained passion ; and it is attractive to study its gradual development. Outside the pocket-books, the chief autograph is the first version, for voices and piano, of the setting of the ninety-fifth Psalm (Op. 46) ; here, there are many interesting modifications, the erasures being, as always in a Mendelssohn manuscript, executed with a neatness that does not conceal the erased matter. There are half a dozen linked ' Songs without Words ', with an autograph title-page, the music being written by a copyist whose calligraphy is nearly as delicately beautiful as the composer's own : five of them are those we know as Nos. 31, 35, 36, 37 and 38, while the remaining piece is still unpublished. It is a vigorous *allegro molto marcato* in D minor, completely characteristic : the quiet end, after the hammering rhythms of what has gone before, is very effective.

Chief in historical importance among the very numerous volumes from Mendelssohn's musical library is the manuscript copy of the 'Matthäus-Passion', acquired as a Christmas present in 1823 and used by the still youthful conductor (he was barely twenty) at the performance on March 11th 1829, which gave the first impulse to the general revival of interest in Bach. It is full of interesting pencilings. Dramatic intensity was obviously sought : dynamic nuances, including swells on short phrases or on single notes, are very frequent (they are especially numerous in the last chorus of the first part). We notice, further, that all the Evangelist's most trying passages have been drastically eased ; that all the instrumental appoggiaturas in "So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen" have been struck out, and also most of them in "Erbarme dich" and "Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben" ; and that the copious cuts included the first six bars of "Erbarme dich" at the final ritornello (which seems very odd) and the wholes of the alto-and-chorus air in E $\flat$  and the arioso before the soprano air in G major. Clarinets are used for the *oboi da caccia* ; nothing seems to be specified about the *oboi d'amore*.

There is plenty of manuscript Bach besides the 'Matthäus-Passion'. There are great quantities of the instrumental music, and portly volumes containing fifty or more cantatas : in the handwriting of contemporary copyists, probably working to Mendelssohn's own commission—though the manuscript of 'Wachet auf' is signed by one C. F. Penzel, who adds August 10th 1755 as the date when he ended his labours. There is the complete Arnold edition of Handel, sumptuously bound and interestingly annotated here and there ; a great array of Cherubini scores ; and so we go

on, from the Wittenberg 'Psalterium Davidis' of 1565 and the Magdeburg Psalter of 1613, down through the first edition of Croft's 'Musica sacra' to the first editions of Chopin—with any number of other interesting things, some of them gifts to Mendelssohn from friends only a little less distinguished.

Twenty-seven volumes contain between seven and eight thousand letters received by Mendelssohn between 1825 and his death in 1847. Naturally enough, the great bulk are the concern of the specializing biographer rather than of the general musician : as we look through the excellent index made by one of the previous owners of the collection, many names awake no memories at all. Some others we know only in connection with Mendelssohn ; others, again, recall musicians and authors who have lives of their own ; at the top, there are four names—those of Goethe, Wagner, Schumann and Berlioz—and it is a privilege to be able to study their thoughts side by side, in their own handwriting.

There is a letter of Berlioz, dated from Prague on April 14th 1846 (Vol. XXIII, No. 215), full of enthusiasm for the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' music, which ends with the words : "Croyez que je vous aime autant que je vous admire, et c'est beaucoup". Affection and admiration : no composer ever enjoyed both of these at once in fuller measure than Mendelssohn. And not least, we may be glad to remember, in England—where, whatever may now in his own country be its temporary fortune—his front-rank work (and there is plenty of it) is still very much alive.

## JOHN BLOW'S ANTHEMS

BY HAROLD WATKINS SHAW

As in the case of many other early English church composers, knowledge of Blow has until recently been confined to those specimens which Boyce selected for his 'Cathedral Music', or those issued in the early nineteenth century by Vincent Novello. Even now there are many to whom 'I beheld and lo ! a great multitude', or 'I was in the spirit'<sup>(1)</sup> represent the sum and type of Blow's church music. Boyce printed ten anthems, and the services in A, G and in E minor, as well as the triple-time setting of the Kyrie and Creed in G, employing the usual methods of the eighteenth-century editor. In modern form twenty-five anthems, including some given in Boyce, are obtainable, though two of this number ('Save Lord and hear us', and 'Look upon mine adversity') are merely extracts from larger works. It is to be deplored that all these editions are not equally representative of the composer's intentions, although those by Sir Sydney Nicholson and Dr. Heathcote Statham are trustworthy. Two Evening Services, in F (transposed to G) and in D minor, or Dorian mode (transposed to E minor), and one Latin motet, 'Salvator mundi', are also now obtainable in reliable editions. This, however, represents but a fraction of the composer's huge output, comprising ninety-one English anthems, eleven Latin motets and a very extensive group of morning, Communion and evening services<sup>(2)</sup>.

There is only one instance of a copy of an anthem by Blow in his own hand bearing an actual date. The autograph of 'My God, my God, look upon me'<sup>(3)</sup> bears the legend "Sept. 6th 1697". Amongst other scanty indications of date is the inscription (not an autograph) on 'When Israel came out of Egypt' in the Music School Collection in the Bodleian Library [c. 39], where there is the note "Composed April 5th 1679"<sup>(4)</sup>. In the same MS. 'When

<sup>(1)</sup> These words were added to an anthem which properly begins 'And I heard a great voice'. Aldrich is generally credited with the emendation, but a note in R.C.M. MS. 1060 ascribes it to W. Hayes.

<sup>(2)</sup> These last are excluded from consideration here, as they are so important as to merit more detailed treatment than would be possible.

<sup>(3)</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 30932, f. 128.

<sup>(4)</sup> Note that R.C.M. 1058, f. 69b, a nineteenth-century copy, gives "April 5th 1674".

the Lord turned again' is marked "Composed Mar. 29th 1675". The British Museum copy of 'I was glad when they said unto me'<sup>(1)</sup> has this note at the end : "This was made by Dr. Blow Oct. ye 15 : 1697 att Hamton Town for the opening of St. Paul's Cathederal." At St. Michael's College, Tenbury, a score of the D minor setting of 'Blessed is the man that hath not walked' [MS. 1031] is marked June 27th 1706.<sup>(2)</sup> Further anthems may be assigned to a particular year by reason of their occasional character. 'O Lord, I have sinned' was composed for the funeral of General Monk in 1670,<sup>(3)</sup> and 'We will rejoice' was written for the "Thanksgiving of ye Rye plot"<sup>(4)</sup>. Four anthems were written for coronation services : 'Behold O God our defender', 'God spake sometime in visions', and 'Let thy hand be strengthened' adorned the ceremonial for James II and his consort in 1685,<sup>(5)</sup> whilst 'The Lord God is a sun and shield' was composed for the coronation of William and Mary in 1689.<sup>(6)</sup> The peace of Ryswick was celebrated by a service in St. Paul's on the same day that the choir was opened for use, and Blow wrote 'Praise the Lord O my soul and all', which would be performed on the same day therefore as 'I was glad'.<sup>(7)</sup> After the destruction by fire of the Chapel Royal in Whitehall, Blow wrote 'Lord remember David' for the opening of the new Chapel in December 1698.<sup>(8)</sup> In connexion with 'I will call upon the Lord' W. H. Husk<sup>(9)</sup> records a note in the old Chapel Royal counter-tenor part, which read : "Composed for the Fast, January 19th [1703-4] after the Great Storm in November 1703." Finally, Blow was one of the several composers who wrote in celebration of the battle of Blenheim in 1704, when he chose as his text, 'Awake, awake, utter a song'<sup>(10)</sup>. For the rest, the only evidence of date is that afforded by the earliest copy whose date is certain, which at least fixes the

<sup>(1)</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 31445, f. 141b.

<sup>(2)</sup> The date, together with the fact that the same MS. contains further anthems by Croft and Clarke for the same date, suggests a celebration of the battle of Ramillies, which was fought on May 23rd 1706. It should be noted that the copy in the British Museum, Add. MS. 17839, f. 224, gives July 27th 1706.

<sup>(3)</sup> B.M. Harl. MS. 7338, f. 211.

<sup>(4)</sup> B.M. Harl. MS. 7340, f. 119. The Rye House Plot was in 1683, but Add. MS. 31444 says "Composed for the Thanksgiving Day for the discovery of the plot against the King's life. Performed Thurday 16 of April 1695".

<sup>(5)</sup> Francis Sandford, 'History of the Coronation of James II and Queen Mary', London, 1687.

<sup>(6)</sup> R.C.M. MS. 1097, f. 185.

<sup>(7)</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 31444, f. 95 : "Composed vpon the Peace . . . 1697".

<sup>(8)</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 31444, f. 101 : "Composed for ye opening of ye new chappell att Whitehall, December ye 9th."

<sup>(9)</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 33291, f. 1b.

<sup>(10)</sup> On the authority of W. H. Husk, B.M. Add. MS. 33292, f. 57b.

latest possible time of composition. Fitzwilliam MS. 88 contains at the front a title-page headed "List of all the anthems contained in this book Sep. ye 13th. Anno Domini 1673." Of the titles which follow, as the handwriting clearly shows, only the first six were entered at the same time as the heading. These include Blow's 'O sing unto the Lord a new song' and 'Sing we merrily'. On reversing the volume we find a list headed "God bless Mr. Henry Purcell 1682, September ye 10th", which contains seven anthems by Blow. But of these all save four are found in a list of anthems copied "into the books of his Majesty's Chappell Royall since anno 1670 to Midsummer 1676".<sup>(18)</sup> Again, the title-page of Fitzwilliam MS. 117<sup>(19)</sup> is dated 1683, and of those contained therein eighteen by Blow were clearly entered at the same time that the page was headed and ruled, but of that number five only are known to have no earlier date. 'Turn Thee unto me' is found in B.M. Add. MS. 33234, which the British Museum authorities cite as being written in 1680-82. The following is a chronological list of Blow's anthems, so far as can at present be ascertained :

1670	'O Lord I have sinned'	(Funeral of Monk)
Not later than 1673		
	'O sing unto the Lord a new song'; 'Sing we merrily'	
1675	'When the Lord turned again'	
Not later than 1676		
	'Behold how good and joyful'; 'O God wherefore'	
	'God is our hope' <sup>(20)</sup> ; 'O how amiable'	
	'Lord how are they increased'; 'O Lord Thou hast'	
	'Save me O God'; 'searched'	
1679	'When Israel came out'	
1680-82	'Turn Thee unto me'	
Not later than 1682		
	'Christ being raised'; 'My God, my soul is vexed'	
	'O Lord God of my salvation'	
1683	'We will rejoice'	(Rye House Plot)
Not later than 1683		
	'And I heard a great voice'; 'Lift up your heads';	
	'Cry aloud and spare not'; 'Sing unto the Lord O ye saints';	
	'The Lord is King and hath put on'	
1685	'Behold O God our defender'	
1685	'Let thy hand be strengthened'	{ (Coronation of James II)
1685	'God spake sometime in visions'	
1689	'The Lord God is a sun'	(Coronation of William and Mary)

(18) H. C. de Lafontaine : 'The King's Musick', Novello & Co., Ltd., p. 905.

(19) Not in Blow's handwriting, as is stated in the printed catalogue.

(20) Blow set this text three times. This probably refers to the 8-part version, which in any case is not later than 1682. (See Fitz. 88, reversed.)

1697 ' My God, my God, look upon me '  
 1697 ' I was glad when they said ' (Opening of St. Paul's)  
 1697 ' Praise the Lord O my soul and all ' (Peace of Ryswick)  
 1698 ' Lord remember David ' (Opening of Chapel Royal)  
 1703-4 ' I will call upon the Lord ' (Fast Day, Jan. 19th)  
 1704 ' Awake, awake, utter a song ' (Battle of Blenheim)  
 1706 ' Blessed is the man that hath not walked ' (? Battle of Ramillies) (D minor)

(This list accounts for approximately one-third of Blow's anthems.)

That Blow's church music does not enjoy a greater popularity at the present time is in some part due to its being essentially of the "cathedral" type, in the sense that many of his anthems are of considerable length, and that the preponderance of "verses" calls for skilled solo voices; but to a greater extent its neglect is due to its association with a style of writing connoted by the term "Restoration". It is true that amongst the distinctive features of that style many are indicative of experiment and immaturity. Amongst these may be recalled the extensive, not to say preponderant use of declamation by solo voices, much trio writing for alto, tenor and bass, with many passages in thirds between the two upper voices, the frequent employment of dotted rhythms, short "echo" repetitions at the ends of sections, and a brief chorus at the close, often a setting of "Hallelujah". Yet because Blow was one of the earliest composers to arise in the time of Charles II, it would be quite fallacious to suppose that all his anthems are in this style; in fact, as will presently be shown, they are by no means confined to it. Against those which are clearly of the Restoration "verse" type it is further urged that they are constructed on very patchwork lines, comprising a series of short sections in different styles, each treating a portion of the text, following each other in crude and abrupt juxtaposition. Whilst in all Restoration church music one is the more conscious of this disjointed construction by reason of familiarity with the smoothly dovetailed sections of Byrd and his contemporaries, it should be remembered that the primary aim of Blow's school was, in Parry's phrase, to "deal directly with the words",<sup>(10)</sup> and this led them, in addition to introducing a great deal of declamation by solo voices, to construct their music in sections corresponding very clearly with those of the text. 'I beheld and lo! a great multitude' is an excellent example of such close correspondence.<sup>(11)</sup> But it is not necessary to defend the whole of

<sup>(10)</sup> 'Oxford History of Music', Vol. 3, p. 265.

<sup>(11)</sup> Revelation, vii. 9-15.

Blow's church music on those grounds, as in many cases, for example in 'Lift up your heads', the transitions are less abrupt, and a new section emerges from the old. Again, by omitting the instrumental ritornelli modern editions do not in all cases represent the composer's intention faithfully: for these passages serve to complete each section in a satisfying manner and destroy the impression of restlessness which is inevitably conveyed by their omission. When strings are not available these orchestral passages should be represented by an organ arrangement. No one who has studied the original MSS., or heard the complete versions of some of these anthems broadcast under Mr. Anthony Lewis in March 1938, can have failed to realize the structural value of such ritornelli and the futility of a criticism based upon their absence. There are now extant orchestral parts to twenty-eight of Blow's anthems, of which a list is appended. Unless specially mentioned, four-part strings should be understood.

' And I heard a great voice '	B.M. Add. 17839, Harl. 7339 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 40.
' Arise O Lord '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Fitz. 117 ; R.C.M. 777 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.
' Ascribe unto the Lord '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 40.
' Blessed is the man that feareth ' (2 trumpets and strings)	B.M. Add. 31444.
' Blessed is the man that hath not ' (C major)	B.M. Add. 17839, 31444 ; Fitz. 117 ; R.C.M. 1060.
' Cry aloud and spare not '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Fitz. 88, 117 ; R.C.M. 1060.
' God spake sometime '	B.M. Add. 31445 ; R.C.M. 777 ; St. Michael's Tenbury 1008.
' Hear my voice O God '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Fitz. 117.
' I beheld and lo ! a great multitude '	B.M. Harl. 7340 ; Ch. Ch. 782 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.
' I beheld and lo ! in the midst '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Fitz. 117.
' I said, In the cutting off '	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Harl. 7338 ; Ch. Ch. 628, 691 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 40.
' I was glad when they said ' (2 trumpets and strings)	B.M. Add. 17839 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 40.
' I will hearken '	Fitz. 117.
' Lift up your heads '	Fitz. 117 ; R.C.M. 1060 ; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.
' Lord Thou hast been gracious '	B.M. Add. 31444.
' O give thanks unto the Lord and call '	B.M. Add. 31444 ; Fitz. 117 ; Ch. Ch. 628 ; R.C.M. 1060.
' O give thanks unto the Lord for He is gracious ' (D minor)	Fitz. 117 ; R.C.M. 1060.

'O sing unto the Lord a new song, all' B.M. Add. 17839; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 40.

'O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done' B.M. Add. 31458; Fitz. 88, 117; R.C.M. 1060.

'Sing unto the Lord O ye saints' (2 flutes, 2 oboes and strings) Fitz. 117.

'Sing we merrily' Fitz. 88, 117; R.C.M. 1060.

'The kings of Tharsis' B.M. Add. 17839, Harl. 7339; Ch. Ch. 628; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.

'The Lord God is a sun' R.C.M. 1097.

'The Lord is king and hath put on' Fitz. 117; R.C.M. 1060; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.

'The Lord is my shepherd' B.M. Add. 17839, Harl. 7338; Ch. Ch. 628.

'Thy mercy O Lord' Fitz. 117; R.C.M. 1060.

'When Israel came out' B.M. Add. 17839; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39; Tenbury 897.

'When the Lord turned again' B.M. Add. 17839; Ch. Ch. 628; Bodl. Mus. Sch. c. 39.

Lastly, Blow suffers from the preference, prevalent to-day, for church music which is less corporeal in expression, more subdued and restrained in treatment, than the Restoration "verse" anthem. But if in any way Restoration church music is deemed unsuitable for use to-day, that must not exclude its claim to be considered simply as music, for, as Roger North says :

The gentlemen must put off their Anno dom, and all that of their acquaintance, and put on ye time and Garb of the age they are to deal in ; And then as Indifferent judges they may determine what is more or less valuable, according to the real use of our hearing faculty, And not according to any prejudices prepossessions or opinions whatever.<sup>(80)</sup>

Of the "verse" anthems, 'O Lord I have sinned' is one of the earliest examples, written during Blow's twenty-second year. Although this anthem remained in general currency until the middle of the last century, it bears clear marks of the composer's immature technique ; yet its sincerity and air of tender pathos (particularly in the solo quartet, "Mine age is departed and removed from me, Thou wilt cut me off with pining sickness, Mine eyes fail with looking upwards, I did mourn as a dove, O Lord I am oppressed, undertake O Lord my God for me") and the musical punning at the word "sighing" are heralds of Blow's true emotional powers :

<sup>(80)</sup> 'The Musical Gramarian', ed. Hilda Andrews, O.U.P., p. 4.

Musical score for John Blow's anthem 'I did mourn as a dove'. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is for voices and the bottom staff is for organ. The vocal part is in common time, with a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are: 'I did mourn as a dove, did mourn', followed by a repeat sign and 'I did mourn as a dove', then 'I did mourn \_\_\_\_\_'. The organ part continues with 'as a dove, dove' and 'I did mourn as a dove etc.', followed by 'as a dove, did mourn as a dove'. The vocal part concludes with 'as a dove, did mourn as a dove'.

'O Lord Thou hast searched me out' is an anthem in which solo passages predominate, and the chorus is confined to a few bars by way of conclusion. If sung at not too quick a rate, and with care to invest each word with its due significance, Blow's setting, mainly for two bass voices, of the majestic words of Psalm cxxxix. has a certain nobility which is inescapable :

Musical score for John Blow's anthem 'If I say, Per-ad-ven-ture the dark-ness shall co-ver'. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is for voices, the middle staff is for organ, and the bottom staff is for organ. The vocal part begins with 'If I say, Per-ad-ven-ture the dark-ness shall co-ver', with a fermata over 'co-ver'. The organ part provides harmonic support. The vocal part then continues with 'then shall my night be turn-ed to day', with a fermata over 'day'. The organ part concludes with 'me then shall my night be turn-ed to day etc.' The vocal part ends with '7 5' and '3—' below the staff.

Typical "verse" anthems in which greater use is made of the chorus, and in which the free declamatory style for the solo voice is replaced by more melodic treatment, are 'Sing we merrily,' 'I beheld and lo ! a great multitude', 'And I heard a great voice' and 'Lift up your heads'. For some reason (perhaps their freedom from those "crudities" which so horrified Burney in the eighteenth century) two of these have become attached to Blow's name in an especial way : yet neither 'I beheld' nor 'And I heard' can compare in musical excellence to 'Lift up your heads'. All four of these anthems are "ritornello" works ; but, with the exception of 'Lift up your heads', the only editions now obtainable neglect that important feature. A fragment of 'Sing we merrily' will serve to illustrate the distinction between the solos in this group of anthems, and those in 'O Lord Thou hast searched' :

TENOR

Take the psalm, bring hither the ta-bret, the merry harp with the lute  
etc.

ORGAN

This anthem contains three sections for full choir, all of which are substantially identical, so binding the composition together somewhat in the manner of the subject of a rondo. The whole anthem, with its jubilant character and six-part homophonic choral writing is an excellent example of Blow in this mood. 'Lift up your heads' is one of his most vigorous and convincing works. A striking and original symphony prepares the way for a bold three-part "verse", part of which, after a repetition of the symphony, is taken up "full" in an effective manner. The contrast between "full" and "verse" is put to good use in dialogue form at the words, "Who is the King of Glory ? It is the Lord strong and mighty ! ", and the word "He", at "He is the King of Glory", is thrown into fine relief. The three-fold repetition of the symphony gives unity to the anthem, and a massive ending in the tonic major closes a fine specimen of seventeenth-century music. The other two examples, too well-known to require description or quotation, exhibit the less welcome features of early Restoration style—dotted rhythms and rather purposeless repetitions between "verse" and "full" : yet their melody and straightforward character have earned them deserved and undoubted celebrity.

The coronation anthem 'God spake sometime in visions' exhibits, like Purcell's 'My heart is inditing', what Arkwright<sup>(11)</sup> has called a union of the brilliancy of the string orchestra to the massive effects of choral writing. Blow's great anthem, by far his longest work in this form, is laid out for double chorus, A.T.B. verses and four-part strings, and, together with Purcell's anthem for the same occasion, marks the culmination of the "verse" anthem with symphonies of the Restoration school.<sup>(12)</sup>

It is a mistake, in dealing with the church music of this period, to over-emphasize either the influence of Charles II or the break with past traditions. There is no reason to suppose that the introduction of symphonies and ritornelli was not due to Charles II, but Tudway says that "The King did not intend by this innovation to alter anything of the Establish'd way. He only appointed this to be done when he came himself to the Chappell. . . ."<sup>(13)</sup> Hence, opportunities were not lacking, even at the Chapel Royal, for maintaining "the Establish'd way". Moreover, a good deal of earlier church music was well known to Blow and his contemporaries. Fitzwilliam MS. 117, which is not earlier than 1683, contains, in addition to works by Restoration composers, a large number of examples of polyphonic church music by Orlando Gibbons, Byrd, Weelkes, Tallis, Robert Whyte, William Mundy and Bull. Hence it is the less surprising to observe that a fair proportion of Blow's anthems have neither solos nor ritornelli, but consist of choral passages, interspersed with trios or quartets for solo voices, the interest of which is more purely polyphonic, and which in most cases may be (though in Blow's day they were not) sung unaccompanied. It was formerly thought that anthems of this type were written for Westminster Abbey; but it was the Chapel Royal whose choir was large enough to perform eight-part works<sup>(14)</sup>, and the list of anthems copied into the Chapel Royal books before 1676<sup>(15)</sup> contains a number

<sup>(11)</sup> 'Musical Antiquary', January 1910.

<sup>(12)</sup> The anthem for William and Mary's coronation is not on so ambitious a scale, whilst the other two for that of James II are simpler works. One of them, 'Let thy hand be strengthened', justifies its fairly frequent use to-day by its firm directness of utterance. A miniature work, 'Let my prayer come up into Thy presence', for S.A.T.B., seems from its text to have been a coronation work, though there is no written evidence of this: if it were available in printed form it would make a charming introit lending itself to delicate vocal interpretation. Blow was organist both of Westminster Abbey and of the Chapel Royal at the coronation of Anne, but we have no knowledge of what part, if any, he took in the ceremony.

<sup>(13)</sup> B.M. Harl. MS. 7338.

<sup>(14)</sup> At the coronation of James II, 1685, the Chapel Royal choir consisted of 12 boys and 33 men (including the three organists): that of the Abbey numbered 8 boys and 16 men. (See Sandford, *Op. cit.*)

<sup>(15)</sup> See above, p. 431.

of this kind of anthem, whilst Tudway's account clearly allows for their performance in the Chapel.

Three very fine specimens of the "full" anthem are amongst those written not later than 1676. 'Save me O God' and 'O God wherefore art Thou absent' are admirable examples of Blow's pure choral style, and show him in his favourite mood of pathetic supplication. The first contains a happy contrast in key when, after a section in E minor depicting the weeping and chastening of the faithful, the mood changes at the words "but Lord I make my prayer unto Thee" to one of firm trust in God, with a clean plunge from E minor to C major before working back in a few bars to the original key for a conclusion. The fine eight-part 'God is our hope' abounds in points of imitation and is a powerful and dignified work in the true *a cappella* style; yet the passage which stamps the anthem as Blow's own is a three-part "verse" by means of which he contrives to illustrate the heaving motion of the waves. The anthem 'My God, my God, look upon me', a poignant cry of anguish and despair, testifies to his continued adherence to the "full" anthem twenty years after the date of those just described. All four have been in more or less constant use since Blow's own time, but it is fortunate that more examples of his "full" anthems are now available. Dr. Heathcote Statham's edition of fourteen should go far towards a re-estimation of Blow's position, for they are more compact and closely knit than the "verse" anthems, while their simpler syllabic treatment and the absence of repetitions of unimportant words makes them more readily acceptable. The opening of 'Be merciful unto me', with its tender beauty at the progression quoted:

The musical score consists of four staves of music in G major, common time, with a treble clef. The lyrics are as follows:

Be mer - ci - ful  
Be mer - ci - ful an - to me O Lord etc.  
Be mer - ci - ful un-to me O Lord  
Be mer - ci - ful un - to me O Lord

or the fragile delicacy of the first few bars of 'My days are gone like a shadow', when compared with 'Lift up your heads' or 'God is

our hope', reveal Blow as a composer of great versatility of mood and expression. 'My days are gone' especially, with its two contrasted moods and its polyphonic "Amen", is a work meriting attention. 'Bow down Thine ear', which has a fine five-part conclusion, and 'Lord Thou knowest all my desire', in which the treatment of the word "groaning" is thoroughly typical, are other sincerely expressive works which deserve wide currency.

Blow's extant music to Latin words is as follows :

'Cantate Domino'	(on a ground)	Two counter-tenors
'Gloria Patri et Filio'		Treble and counter-tenor
'Gloria Patri qui creavit'		S.S.A.T.B.
'In lectulo meo'	(on a ground)	Counter-tenor and tenor
'Laudate nomen'		Two trebles
'Misericere mei'	(canon)	Two trebles
'O bone Jesu'	(canon)	Two trebles
'Paratum cor meum'	(on a ground)	Two trebles
'Post haec audivi'	(on a ground)	Counter-tenor and bass
'Quam diligo legem'		Two trebles
'Salvator mundi'		S.S.A.T.B.

Most of these, it should frankly be said, are little more than curiosities, but the two five-part works are of great interest. 'Gloria Patri qui creavit' hangs fire a little at the outset and suffers to some extent from the use of "points" which are a little monotonous and undistinguished, but the conception of the whole is broad, and its brilliant vocal passages, as at the words "tibi debetis omnis honor", and its climax from the words "et fortitudo Deo nostro in secula seculorum" to its jubilant ending, make up in part for the blemishes by which it just misses greatness :

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves represent the voices: two counter-tenors, treble, and two basses (S.S.A.T.B.). The bottom staff represents the organ. The music is in common time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal parts begin with a series of rests, followed by a melodic line. The organ part provides harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the organ staff: "ti - bi", "ti - bi", "ti - bi", "ti - bi - hon - or, ti - bi - ho - nor vir - tus". The organ part ends with a forte dynamic.

ho - nor vir - tus  
honor vir - tus

ho - nor vir - tus  
et fort-i - tu do De-o  
etfort-i - tu do De - o

et fort-i - tu

et fort-i - tu

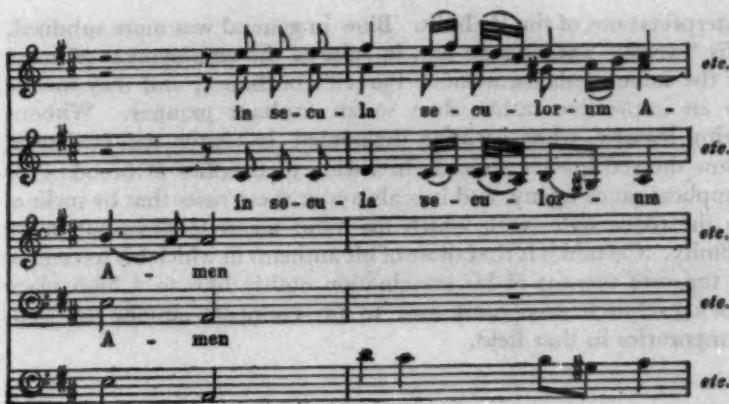
bos - tro

bos - tro

do De - o nos - tro

do De-o nos - tro

in se-cu - la se-cu - lor - um  
in se-cu - la se-cu - lor - um



The other, 'Salvator Mundi', which has done more than anything of recent years to bring Blow's true musical nature to light, is now well known. It is impossible to pass it by, however, without reference to the exquisite suspensions of the opening page, the pathetic reiteration of the words "per crucem" leading to a fine homophonic climax in the middle, and the increasing urgency of the supplication throughout the concluding section. This motet is without question a permanent treasure of English religious music.

It is natural to set Blow's achievements alongside those of Purcell. The field which Blow tilled was not so extensive as Purcell's, and it is only as a composer of songs, choral odes and church music, not of dramatic or instrumental music, that he invites such a comparison. The difference in the proportion which their respective church music bears to their total output would seem to argue a difference in the interests of the two composers. It is difficult to think of any circumstance other than lack of interest which would cause Blow, with one solitary exception, to neglect dramatic music; on the other hand the large number of his anthems, and the fact that he set and re-set the liturgical parts of the service so frequently, testify to a particular attraction and devotion to that part of his work. The apparent similarities of the two composers' church music are merely those which they share with any of their contemporaries—a similar public, similar instrumental and vocal resources and the common idiom of their time. But their musical personalities are distinct. Purcell delighted in and took the fullest advantage of the opportunities his age afforded of introducing vigorous secular elements into anthems which are unrivalled as brilliant and dramatic

interpretations of the Psalmist. Blow in general was more subdued. His "verse" anthems do not, in spite of the employment of many of the same methods, achieve Purcell's brilliance, and they incline to an impressive rather than to an exultant manner. Without being lacking, when occasion demanded, in vigour and brilliance, Blow showed special aptitude in setting texts either of brooding or supplication or agony, and it is always in these cases that he inclines to the older style, with which his mind seems to have had more affinity. Certain it is that those of his anthems in which his technique is the sure servant of his imagination entitle him to a high place among church composers and to pre-eminence among his contemporaries in that field.

any field which does not concern us directly. Music and the musical ear to the Greeks was secondary to the material sciences, and the two were not considered as equals until the 18th century, when Frenchmen began to question the old methods.

## INTONATION—AND THE EAR

BY LL. S. LLOYD

*It is advisable to guard at the outset against the familiar misconception that scales are made first and music afterwards. Scales are made in the process of endeavouring to make music.*

PARRY, 'Art of Music.'

*We must distinguish carefully between composers and theoreticians. Neither the Greeks, nor the great musical composers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were people to be blinded by a theory which their ears could upset.*

HELMHOLTZ, 'Sensations of Tone.'

*An animated intonation (on the violin) is just as little mathematically true as an animated time-keeping is strictly according to the metronome.*

HAUPTMANN, Letters.

*The subject of just intonation is fatally fascinating to people whose mathematical insight has not attained to the notion of approximation. In art, as in mathematics, accuracy lies in estimating the relevant degree of approximation rather than in unrolling interminable decimals.*

SIR DONALD TOVEY, 'Encyclopaedia Britannica', 14th ed.  
(art. 'Harmony').

If we measure the diameter of a penny, the value of the answer will depend on the accuracy of the measure used. We might measure the penny by the housewife's tape-measure. We should be able to give the result to perhaps a sixteenth of an inch. Or we might use an engineer's steel rule. That would give us an answer to at least a sixty-fourth part of an inch or, we might say with fair certainty, to a hundredth of an inch. If we used calipers with a vernier attached, we could estimate the measurement to a thousandth part of an inch. But it would be possible to make a measurement still more accurately by using optical means, when our answer would be expressed in wave-lengths of light. (There are more than forty thousand wave-lengths of yellow [sodium] light in an inch.)

The only instrument which the musician has for measuring musical intervals is his ear. As a measuring instrument the ear has its natural limits of accuracy, just like the various means described for measuring a penny. The accuracy of the ear depends on circumstances, such as the time allowed for making the measurement

or the nature of the interval to be measured. No theoretical conjectures about acoustics and music are of any significance unless they take these limitations of the ear into account.

Four ways of measuring a penny have been described. The first three, by the tape-measure, the steel rule and the calipers with vernier, may be compared to the varying measurements of musical intervals made by the ear in listening to the performance of a musical composition. They indicate the accuracy of hearing which the art of music accepts as fixing the conditions it has to meet. The fourth set of measurements, using optical means, may be likened to the efforts of "theoreticians" who, leaving the ear out of account, make calculations of musical intervals as heard in an imaginary world of their own. That is to underestimate their offence. The tuner of a keyboard instrument, with time at his command, and with power to control the rates of the beats he hears, can make measurements which we can liken only to our fourth way of measuring a penny. That gives to the calculations of "theoreticians" a certain plausible appearance which makes them the more dangerous.

Crossword puzzles are a pleasant leisure occupation, but they are not literature. Jig-saw puzzles are an amiable diversion for many, but they are not art. There is entertainment in calculating the arithmetical niceties of the diesis, the diachisma, the great limma and so forth. The occupation is harmless so long as we remember that it has very little to do with music.

We are so conscious of the delicacy of the musical ear for detecting playing or singing out of tune that it is difficult to realize that its measurements are only approximations, and that their accuracy depends on circumstances. That this must be so can perhaps be more readily appreciated by thinking of other powers which our ears possess, or rather do not possess. Take, as an example, the ear's estimation of loudness. Loudness is a sensation in our ears. The sensation has a physical cause—the energy of the vibrations falling on the drum of the ear, which the physicist calls the intensity of the sound. Intensity is a physical measurement which is independent of the ear. (The physicist says that it varies as the square of the product of the amplitude and the frequency of the vibration in the air.) Now here is the surprising discovery of the laboratory. While the highest note we can hear vibrates only a thousand times as rapidly as the lowest note we can hear, it is found that, in the region above the stave with a treble clef in which the ear is most sensitive, the loudest note our ears can bear to hear vibrates with ten million million times as much energy as the faintest note they can hear at

the same pitch. The figure is staggering ; but it prepares us for learning that when two high treble notes are sounded in succession with a short interval between them (half a second suffices) the ear can detect no difference in their loudness until, broadly speaking, the intensity of the sound of the second note shows a 25 per cent increase over that of the first. This ratio—25 per cent—is the increase in the rate of vibration we hear between two notes a major third apart. Nature cannot have it both ways. The enormous range of intensity between sounds we can just hear and those which are unbearably loud demands a compensating sacrifice. That sacrifice is the sensitiveness of the ear to smaller changes of intensity than those described above. If, however, the notes are sounded without any interval between them, and under ideal laboratory conditions, the ear can detect loudness-intervals about half the size of those described.

This digression will be instructive if it serves to illustrate the fact that there *must* be limits to the perception of differences of intonation by our ears. Any analogy with loudness-intervals will apply to notes heard in succession ; and, in fact, the order of measurement of musical intervals made by the ear in varying circumstances, melodic or harmonic, is not uniform. The three methods of measuring a penny with which we began were compared with the estimation of intervals in the actual performance of music. The full story is too long to tell here : it is expounded in Helmholtz's classical treatise and elsewhere. But those who follow up the reference will find a full examination of the physical data which enable the ear to detect mistuning through beats between the harmonics and (if the notes are loud) the combination tones. This gives a physical scale of definition of harmonic intervals. The octave is most sharply defined. Then as we proceed up the series of intervals with ratios between numbers progressively larger and larger, we find the definition becoming less and less. The edges of the interval, so to speak, become more and more blurred, till finally with the tritone the ear has no physical means of estimating exact tuning at all. (The physicist says that an octave is the interval between two notes whose rates of vibration are in the ratio 2/1. Theoretically the corresponding ratio for the fifth is 3/2, for the major third 5/4, for the minor third 6/5 and for the tritone 45/32.)

We may compare the measurements by the housewife's tape-measure to the accuracy with which the ear measures, or perhaps we should say is content to measure, the position of *unessential* notes, the sort of accuracy which (as the context shows) Moritz Hauptmann had in mind in the quotation at the head of this article,

in which he was writing of decorating notes, such as "passing-notes." The measurements by the engineer's steel rule we may liken to the estimation, by the ear, of the intervals of discords. The measurements by the calipers and vernier may be compared with the accuracy which the musical ear expects in the intonation of the purest concords sounded on the strong beat of the music. This will not appear unnatural if its bearing on counterpoint is considered.

While it is important to remember that conjecture about intonation cannot ignore the varying sensitiveness of the ear in varying circumstances for what, to the "theoretician", are small errors of intonation, there is another test which musicians must apply—and they have a right to insist on its application by the physicist. That test is the evidence of the history of musical composition. This is the rock, as Helmholtz warned them, on which "theoreticians" come to shipwreck. And they received a complementary warning from one of our greatest physicists. In his *Rede Lecture*, Clerk Maxwell wrote: "Helmholtz, by a series of daring strides, has effected a passage for himself over that untrodden wild between acoustics and music—that Serbonian bog where whole armies of scientific musicians and musical men of science have sunk without filling it up". Subsequent investigations have shown us how to step round some of the puddles over which the German Colossus (as Clerk Maxwell called him) strode in his seven-league boots. But if we let go of his coat-tails we shall assuredly founder in the bog.

The English translation of Helmholtz's '*Sensations of Tone*' contains numerous interpolations and footnotes, as well as a lengthy appendix, furnished by his painstaking and erudite translator, Alexander J. Ellis. They are all carefully distinguished from the authentic text by square brackets. Ellis refers to the difficulties he experienced when first he studied the subject. Determined that others should not suffer in the same way, he attempted to make Helmholtz's meaning more clear to those who needed assistance. It is a pathetic fact that, by so doing, in this country he stood in the way of a true understanding of the master by his generation. Ellis had two disabilities. To him, as to his contemporaries, the music of the sixteenth century was a closed book. We have no such excuse. Further, he conceived of the musical scale as confined to the filling of the octave by a number of notes of rigidly fixed intonation. To explain departures from that picture he invented "duodenation" (a kind of musical nightmare). But he was only carrying to their logical conclusion the misconceptions of an academic school of

music which saw truth in Dr. Day's artificial theories of harmony. For such a mistake there is no apology to-day. Those of us who cannot read German owe a great debt to Ellis for an authoritative translation of 'The Sensations of Tone'. The full title of this great work runs on : "as a *physiological* basis for the theory of music". The italics are the present writer's. Rameau's ideas, developed by Dr. Day, had a purely *physical* basis. That is why it is so dangerous to talk about the physical basis of music : one is all the time creating an atmosphere of misconception which excludes the ear from the picture. But, if we understand why Ellis was misled, and why Parry's protest was called for, it is not unkind to demonstrate his mistakes.

It would be easy to pillory his notes in a manner which would leave musicians convinced of his errors. Rather let us treat them as affording logical proof, by the method of *reductio ad absurdum*, that his musical premisses were wrong. In Appendix XIX to 'The Sensations of Tone,' Ellis gives an example of what he called "trioni" music. He begins with the closing strain of a chorale from Bach's St. Matthew Passion, quoted by Helmholtz (see Chapter XV, page 471 of the 1875 English edition). This is in B minor, and as Stanford explains at the beginning of his 'Musical Composition', the second and seventh degree notes of the minor scale are typical mutable notes. Bach uses a chromatic seventh on the supertonic to introduce his final cadence, and in this the major sixth of the scale must clearly be sharpened for ideally perfect intonation. Ellis's "trioni" music requires three harmoniums for correct "duodenies". (The reader who meets these terms for the first time need not worry about them—they do not exist outside Ellis's nightmare.) These harmoniums have pitches at intervals of a comma. Ellis transcribes the extract from the Passion for these three harmoniums. Those who can turn up the result, page 684 of the 1875 English translation of Helmholtz, will see three notes each of which is common to two harmoniums. These notes are the mutable notes, C#, A $\natural$  and G#, which we should expect to find. So far, so good, though Ellis is assuming an exact intonation some part of which, in fact, is lost in the limitations of the ear's accuracy. But now turn to his comments on the mutable notes to be found on page 471. "*It is evident therefore that Bach is thinking in tempered music.*"

If this is true it must apply equally to earlier "trioni" music. Here is the opening strain of 'Sumer is icumen in', transcribed from Groves' 'Dictionary of Music', to which the date *circa 1240* is authoritatively assigned to-day :

## Sumer is icumen in

etres 1240

SCORE

Cantus I

Bassus II

Bassus I

Harmonium I

Harmonium II

Harmonium III

In this example of Ellis's "troni" music Harmonium I is tuned a comma sharp on Harmonium II, which is tuned in "just intonation", while Harmonium III is tuned a comma flat on Harmonium II. In the second and fourth "bars", to use modern terminology, we find harmonies with the second-degree note of the scale (here G) as bass; and these are the harmonies which require mutable notes if the interval G to D is to be a perfect fifth.

Three harmoniums are required for this "troni" music. Therefore John of Fornsete, monk of Reading, thought in tempered music in the thirteenth century—though Salinas did not invent mean-tone temperament for another three hundred years! The conclusion might be contrasted with Ellis's reason for laying it down that

Palestrina "often credited with just intonation . . . must have used mean-tone temperament".<sup>(1)</sup> But most musicians will agree that, following Euclid, we may now continue : "which is absurd ; therefore the musical premisses were wrong. Q.E.D." (The crotchet on Harmonium I is particularly absurd, but not unfair to Ellis.)

The protest in the January issue of this journal which Dr. Murray Barbour made against the "theoretician's" mistaken idea of just intonation as a method of tuning is so detailed, so admirably documented, but alas still so necessary to-day, that it is worth our while to bury, in the depths of absurdity, the corpse he has left. But those of us who live in glass houses should not throw stones. It was because English musicians had forgotten their most glorious musical heritage in the nineteenth century, and because they accepted their counterpoint from Cherubini and their harmony from Dr. Day, that misconception arose among the physicists and that whole armies of English physicists and musicians alike have been lost in the Serbonian bog. We, who have not their excuse, should see to it that every one interested in the relation of acoustics to music shall know that musical scales can never be played perfectly on a keyboard instrument, because its notes are fixed, not mutable (though, on the clavichord, equal temperament was a good enough makeshift for Bach), that the scale system of the art of music is a flexible thing to-day just as it was in the sixteenth century, that scales are developed by writing music, and that the art of music has never found any difficulty in using what some have described as an "acoustically imperfect" scale : in short, that music is made by composers and not by "theoreticians".

<sup>(1)</sup> Because Palestrina was junior to Salinas.

## AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC

BY ARTHUR L. RICH

FOLKSONG in America? The usual response to this query is a polite statement to the effect that American folk music is a purely mental conception of excessively patriotic groups, and because the country with its culture (if it has a culture) is very new, what generally passes as American folk music is really the work of Indians and Negroes. This is a mistaken notion, for we find in America to-day a folksong literature quite comparable with that of the older European countries.

Passing quickly over the Indian chants, war-cries and songs, which clearly belong only to the Indian folk culture and have had but small influence upon the music of the white race, we may group all other American folk music into two divisions : first, that native to America, and second, that derived from Europe.

The first group would include the railroad songs, the chain-gang songs, many of the war songs and most of the white Negro spirituals. All these are genuinely American, having been created by Americans of many ranks and situations, and are a part of the life and times which produced them. The labourers who were building railroad empires in the middle of the nineteenth century had ballads telling of the adventures, the heroism and grim determination of these undertakings ; they celebrated the great abilities of railroad workers in track-laying, engineering and what not, they retold many times the details of unusually successful "runs" and great disasters. These railroad songs could come only from America, and from that particular period of the national life. Likewise, the canal songs belong to the somewhat earlier period of canal building and transport ; the levee songs and chain-gang songs can be appreciated only by an understanding of their milieu. Even to-day one may witness folksong creation by the chain-gang as it toils on the roads of the South ; for when one worker begins a verse of a song, others take it up where he leaves off, improvising words and freely modifying the melody according to their individual whim. This process of group improvisation is one method by which much of the world's folk music has come into being.

Many American folksongs, like their European cousins, first saw life in the music-hall, the bar-room or in places even less polite ; but the original words have long since been chastened and made respectable. By a similar process the war songs of the 1860's were taken over by the common people and placed in the folk literature.

During the great religious revivals which swept the country throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, much music was used, and was taught by rote to the congregations. From meeting to meeting the words and music were modified ; but with the flickering out of the revival movement the songs were lost, except in isolated communities. Nearly a century later these songs were rediscovered by the world as white or Negro spirituals. A direct comparison of the revival song and the spiritual clearly shows that they were originally identical. Modifications of words and of music there are, to be sure, but these one might expect after a century of oral and only oral repetition. The Negro slave heard the white people sing the revival songs at home or out on the plantation ; he learned them by ear and then made them his own. To-day's Negro spiritual has the slave language of the early nineteenth century, a Negroid English then used in the fields with a phraseology then current among the white people with whom slaves came in contact. In no sense is it an African dialect. Furthermore, in the "untouched" Negro spiritual the simple harmony and the frequent duple metre with syncopation, as well as the type of melody and sentiment of the words, show clearly that it is a revised or transformed version of the early nineteenth-century white revival song. Since then, the so-called Negro spiritual is really a Negro version of the white spiritual, not valued as highly in America as the Negro work-song, which is a more distinctive contribution by the Negro to American folk music.

The second class of American folksong is made up of seventeenth and eighteenth-century European folksongs brought to the country by the colonists. It is more than a coincidence that nearly all these songs are derived from English, Scotch or French sources. We know that the settlers from Germany, Sweden, Holland and other countries must have brought with them at least part of the rich folksong literatures of those countries, which has failed to survive since these peoples adopted the English language a generation or two after coming to America. Folksongs depend largely upon words for transmission and survival. In this connection, it may be noted that French colonists came to Charleston, South Carolina and to Canada. In Canada these people retained their native language, but in Charleston they at once took up English ; thus to-day one

hears French folksongs in the Saint Lawrence valley of Canada, but not at Charleston.

As intercommunication became facilitated, and as society became cosmopolitan, newer songs took the place of the older songs brought over from the mother countries, except in remote localities, such as the southern Appalachian mountain region, which resisted this tendency for two centuries. In sections such as this one may hear English and Scotch folksongs of two centuries ago, which in spite of the inevitable changes taking place in that length of time give us a 'Barbara Allen' and an 'Earl Brand' quite like those one might hear in the "Border Country". In French Canada one may hear folksongs that can be heard in rural France. In the industrial and urban regions of both Europe and America, the original folksong heritage has been largely dissipated.

Some of the songs of the southern mountains have a more universal ancestry than just England or Scotland, in the same way that a few of the French Canadian songs can be traced beyond France; and these occur in the folk literature of many European countries. For example, 'The False (Wicked) Knight', the 'Homecoming of the Soldier Husband' and 'Lazarus' are found in the folk literatures of England, France, Germany, Switzerland and the Italian Piedmont, as well as in those of the southern mountaineers and French Canadians. Naturally there is considerable variation in the versions of these songs, and indeed many versions of any one of them may be found in each language. But in spite of that variety, these songs are basically the same, regardless of the language, and this fact indicates that they were known throughout all Europe prior to the period of American colonization; which leads us to believe that they were dispersed by the medieval troubadours and minstrels. It is possible, also, that some few songs have their roots further back than medieval times, perhaps in the period of folk legends.

## THREE STRING QUARTETS ATTRIBUTED TO PERGOLESI

By HUMPHREY CLAYDON

DURING the winter of 1936 a collection of engraved and manuscript music was acquired by Messrs. Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., by whose permission I am able here to discuss three manuscript string Quartets, apparently by Pergolesi, which were contained in the lot. They are written in a late eighteenth-century English hand on paper of a thick, rough texture and brownish colour, each running to about twelve quarto pages. In places two of the manuscripts are rather discoloured by damp and the notation is somewhat obscured, although never so badly as to be indecipherable. All three manuscripts are of the separate parts (*Violino primo*, *Violino 2do*, *Alto Viola* and *Violoncello*, as they are designated) with the heading on the cover of each 'Simphonia in 4 Parts composed by Pere Golese'. Although this spelling is unusual, there can be no doubt that Giambattista Pergolesi is the name intended by the copyist. In a manuscript in the same hand of part of Pergolesi's 'Stabat Mater' his name is spelt in the same way.

The importance of the manuscripts lies in the fact that they appear to be unrecorded elsewhere. There is no reference in Eitner's 'Quellen-Lexikon' or Grove's Dictionary which seems to correspond with them, and they are not to be found re-arranged in any form in the British Museum collection of printed or manuscript music. The autographs are in all probability unknown, and Pergolesi died in 1736, forty years or more before the date of the present English copies. Their authenticity cannot therefore be proved from external evidence. It is obvious also that they are not very carefully made : comparison of parallel passages exposes at once a number of copyist's errors.

Mr. F. Bonavia says of Pergolesi ('Daily Telegraph', Saturday, July 31st 1937) : "He probably wrote a good deal that is to-day deservedly forgotten" and "dying at the age of twenty-six, he left behind a vast number of works of little worth." Although I shall not try in this paper to claim that these Quartets represent chamber music at its highest and purest, they are of much more

than "little worth", chiefly on account of their melodic qualities. Whether Pergolesi was the composer will probably never be settled beyond all doubt, but their idiom is at least as much that of Pergolesi as of any contemporary Italian composer. Italian they unquestionably are. It is much less likely that they are the work of the somewhat later Cimarosa, for instance, whose part-writing is so much more developed.

The fashion for Pergolesi in England was posthumous. At the time of his death (in 1736) at the age of twenty-six he was entirely unknown in this country. The first English enthusiast of any note was the poet Gray, who collected a vast amount of contemporary Italian music during his tour of Italy in 1739-40. Several times in his correspondence he refers with obvious pleasure to Pergolesi's vocal works, but states in a letter written in May 1742 that "two nights did I enjoy it [Pergolesi's opera 'Olympiade'] all alone, snug in a nook of the gallery, but found no one in those regions had ever heard of Pergolesi, nay, I heard several affirm it was a composition of Pescetti's". Apparently some years elapsed before his works achieved any great degree of popularity. However, by the time Burney was writing—which is also the period of the present manuscripts—Pergolesi's reputation was well on the way to its zenith, from which it did not decline for many years. The article in Grove is (as Mr. Bonavia has suggested in the essay referred to above), decidedly derogatory to his achievement and is surely just as much at fault in decrying him as some previous writers have been in their excessive estimate of his gifts. However, the history of Pergolesi's fame in this country helps to account for the comparatively late date of these manuscripts and to minimize its negative significance.

A feature of the Quartets which points strongly towards Pergolesi as the composer is that their interest is almost entirely confined to the two violins. Little use is made of the viola or cello beyond the humdrum work of providing accompaniment. Except where all four parts are in unison, there is no melody at all for the cello, and only a slight hint here and there for the viola. In connection with this characteristic Burney states in his 'History of Music' (first edition, Vol. IV, p. 554) that "Pergolesi's first and principal instrument was the violin". He wrote, then, from his own point of view, stressing the melodic element at the expense of the contrapuntal. Evidence from his vocal works gives further support. They are the most important part of the corpus of his compositions and are also notable chiefly for the arias. A number of these are still heard on the concert platform—the 'Se tu m'ami', for instance,

which was an outstanding item in the repertory of the late Conchita Supervia. In the three Quartets the slow movements are remarkable for the sweetness and grace of their themes :

(1) 'Simphonia' in B flat :

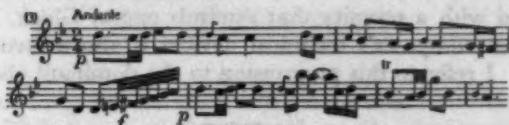


(2) 'Simphonia' in F minor and major :



and (3), probably best of all :

'Simphonia' in G major :



The themes of the first and third movements, which are usually in a quick tempo, are somewhat less noteworthy, and in one case (the first movement of the B<sub>b</sub> major Quartet) of comparatively little account. Of part-writing and contrapuntal devices there are only one or two traces. And when he begins a movement contrapuntally he very quickly changes to the harmonic way of thought. The most usual form is, of course, the binary.

\* \* \*

*The B flat major 'Simphonia'.* The opening bars have considerable vivacity, but the theme, if it may be called by so dignified a name, is a mere motif or pattern. The movement proceeds for nearly sixty bars in animated 3-8 time, alternating between tonic and dominant, when the first half is brought to a conclusion by a sixteen-bar passage for the two violins, consisting mainly of semi-quavers and of a rococo sprightliness not unlike Scarlatti :



The second half is naturally to a large extent a recapitulation of the first, beginning in F major and working back to the original B<sub>b</sub>, using the keys of G minor and E<sub>b</sub> major (bar 107) on the way.

At this bar another Scarlatti-like passage begins on the second violin :



with the first violin taking the accompaniment. This passage is immediately repeated by the first violin in the key of F.

The theme of the *Andante*, given in Ex. 1 above, is announced with the second violin accompanying at a third or sixth below, and is followed by a florid passage typical of eighteenth-century opera and indicative of the composer's preoccupation with melodic and vocal questions. The general feeling of sweetness and gravity is not, however, in any way marred by it. In fact, the whole movement is pervaded with a serenity that reminds one of Gluck. And one of this great composer's technical devices is also a favourite with Pergolesi ; I refer to this progression to the dominant chord :



which is used, in one inversion or another, to mark the beginning of the final section or coda of a movement. (Compare Gluck's wonderfully effective use of this device in the 'Che farò' from 'Orfeo'. This so-called "German sixth" came to be hackneyed through indiscriminate use in Mozart's day, but in the time of Pergolesi it had the freshness of an innovation.) Pergolesi decorates it for the two violins in this way :



The *Allegro* which completes the work is less easy to analyse. Its theme is nowhere repeated exactly as it is first announced :



The two minims of B occur at intervals in bold contrast with the garrulous nature of the greater part of the movement, but with this change : the progression is in each case downward, preserving

the original tonic-dominant relationship of the first two bars. As the movement is worked out the two parts B and C are employed independently, C, somewhat elaborated, being used to conclude the work. As in the other Quartets, there is a considerable use of groups of triplets alternately with the normal 2-4 groups in the development. From expression marks used in repetitions of the theme it appears that the second minim was intended to be trilled. The copyist is everywhere vague on points of this description.

The F minor-major 'Symphonia' is throughout improvisatory in form and rather unusual in having a slow first movement in a minor key and the other two in the tonic major. It is distinctly elegiac in character, with a clearly defined theme enunciated by the two violins :



which is taken up by the viola and cello at the third beat of the first bar. This is one of the rare traces of counterpoint and is immediately abandoned for a harmonic development. In contrast with the clearly marked opening the subsidiary matter is of a light and delicate texture, consisting of runs in semiquaver series, series of trilled notes with frequently interspersed rests. Except for a frequent use of the fragment marked D, the theme does not reappear until the coda (five bars). This unusual form gives the movement the quality of a prelude or overture, directing the listener forward to the ensuing movements, rather than satisfying him as a well-proportioned artistic whole. In the last bar but one there is a natural sign before the A $\flat$  in the first violin part, but it is omitted from the second violin part, which is here in harmony, not in unison. The presence of the one natural sign, however, suggests that the movement is intended to close in the major key.

The *Andante*, of which the opening bars are quoted in Ex. 2 above, continues in rambling mood, with the considerable use, as may be expected in the slow movement, of thirds and sixths in the treble. The theme is not repeated in full, but much use is made of the section marked A. Once more counterpoint is not attempted, although there are a few pleasant fragments of "conversation" between the two upper and the two lower parts.

The concluding *Allegro* is exceptionally animated in style, even for an Italian finale. Again the opening bars are never repeated, except in occasional cursory reference. The progression from tonic to subdominant is quite a feature ; the movement both opens and

closes with a figure based on it. Patterns such as



form the backbone of the movement, with rhythmic groups like



alternating by way of contrast. At points of climax there is a marked tendency to ascending passages in unison. Before the final section of the movement occurs the harmonic device referred to earlier in the course of these notes. Although this Quartet would be pleasant to listen to, its extempore character will easily be realized from this analysis. It cannot compare in formal elegance with

*The G Major 'Simphonia,'* which is certainly the best of the three works under consideration. The three movements are well contrasted, the themes are suitably treated according to their nature, attractively developed, and form and proportion within each movement are well managed. About the *Allegro* there is an air of exceptional fantasy and fragility, aided by very light scoring for the lower parts. The theme is :



The form is binary, with two statements of the subject in the first part and one (in A minor) in the second part. Delicate and sparkling passage work is a characteristic feature and the two halves are rounded off with a florid and brilliant coda, the first time naturally in the dominant and the second in the tonic key. Although the movement is in 2-4 time, much use is made of groups of semi-quaver triplets.

The *Andante*, quoted in Ex. 3, is the most spontaneous of the several attractive airs in these Quartets. Its character is grave and stately, with the second violin accompanying at a third or sixth below. It is followed by a suggestion of a theme of stronger and firmer outline in the relative major. The movement falls naturally into two parts, with a coda preceded again by the "German sixth" device, here extended and elaborated. Throughout the harmony is somewhat fuller and more varied than elsewhere.

The theme of the concluding *Allegro* is based entirely on the tonic

chord of G major, and is announced boldly by all four parts in unison :



The movement is ternary (X Y X) in form, being the only one with a *da capo* marked in the manuscript. The first section (X) is an example of fully developed rondo form in miniature (66 bars). The middle section (Y) treats the first and second subjects with modifications in the relative minor, reaching eventually the key of B minor. Then follows a repetition of the first section (X), completing the work. The tendency of reverting to unison in passages leading to climaxes and in codas may again be noted. There are two clearly marked fragments of counterpoint where the viola and cello are given a section of the main theme, while the violins accompany with a passage developed from it ; but, as before, this treatment is quickly abandoned.

\* \* \*

The quotations I have given will show that these three Quartets have a quite unusual felicity and melody. As Burney says of Pergolesi's works ('History', Vol. IV, p. 556) : "He had perhaps more energy of genius, and a finer tact, than any of his predecessors : for though *no labour appears in his productions*, even for the church, *where the parts are thin, and frequently in unison*, yet greater and more beautiful effects are often produced in performance than are promised in the score". (The italics are mine.) The arresting quality of these little works is that no labour appears in them, so effortless and spontaneous do they seem. On the other hand, on reading the parts, one might justifiably urge against a number of passages that "the parts are thin and frequently in unison". My own remarks have been based mainly on reading, helped out with a little study of the parts at the pianoforte. For a considered judgment of their qualities performance by a string quartet is desirable.

\* \* \*

NOTE.—In making quotations I have followed the manuscripts exactly, placing any suspected erroneous readings in round brackets and indicating obvious emendations by square brackets.

## REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

This list contains a selection of recent books on music. All prices are net, and in the case of foreign books the figure quoted is that at which the cheapest copy can be purchased in the country in which the book is published.

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*See also under SCHUMANN.*

C. B. O.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*Music, History and Ideas.* By Hugo Leichtentritt. pp. 292. (Harvard University Press ; Oxford University Press, 1938) 15s.

This is a book not for the specialist nor indeed for the ordinary cultivated musician, who ought to be familiar with its material already, but for the educated reader whose interest in music has not blossomed into knowledge. Such a reader is not likely to be content with the mere text-book pabulum which satisfies examinees. He will want to know how music fits in with the general history of mankind and what its relationship is to the development of civilization. Dr. Leichtentritt has tried to supply this want and has done it in a way that should arouse interest and stimulate curiosity. There is no room here for detailed investigation. A book of this kind is bound to be stuffed with generalizations, and every one increases the author's responsibility. Fortunately Dr. Leichtentritt is a scholar too careful to be satisfied with empty talk. If it is not always possible to agree with his conclusions, there is at least abundant evidence that they rest on a substantial foundation of knowledge.

To study music in conjunction with the other arts and philosophy is a fascinating exercise, but the fascination may be dangerous. The desire for symmetry may lead to the drawing of comparisons where no fundamental similarity exists. The much-talked-of "spirit of the age" may be a much more elusive thing than the historian suspects. Like others before him Dr. Leichtentritt is inspired to some vagueness by the term "Gothic", perhaps because his knowledge of Gothic architecture and its phases is not sufficiently clearly defined in his own mind. To recognize the part played by construction in late medieval and early Renaissance music is all very well; but does construction in music bear any exact relation to construction in architecture? There is a danger here of being misled by the similarity of words; and even if we admit that medieval polyphony is architectural, is there any reason other than the fortunate conjunction in time why we should compare it with Gothic? The multiplication of these parallels is apt to produce a fog in which clear thinking falters.

When he comes to later periods Dr. Leichtentritt is enabled by his material to be more precise. The spirit of the age becomes defined by the citation of names. "Without Schiller", he says, "no Beethoven, no Wagner; without Goethe, no Schubert, no Schumann, Mendelssohn or Brahms." The epigram is perhaps a little too succinct. We are not expected to believe that Schiller's genius conditioned Beethoven's, except in the sense that every phenomenon in the universe is connected with and hence responsible for every other. What Dr. Leichtentritt has been saying is that Schiller's drama and his philosophy influenced Beethoven's thought. The reader who assumes that the flowering of Beethoven's genius would have been impossible without Schiller will be

pushing the interpretation of the author's epigram too far. A genius takes fire from the associations of his environment and period ; but it is impossible for us to define precisely the associations he requires. We can be certain that Beethoven would have been a great composer if Schiller had never existed.

It is well to be reminded that Beethoven was susceptible to the liberal ideas of his time, but it is also well to remember that he was first and foremost a musician. Ideas and environment may suggest the form in which an artist works, but they do not condition the quality of his inspiration, nor does it rest with them to determine the heights to which he will rise. The suggestion that an artist is great in consequence of the circumstances of his time needs to be countered by the view that he is often great in spite of them. The reader of this book should be warned against accepting too enthusiastically the author's desire to see civilization progressing on neatly parallel lines. If he bears this caution in mind he will find the book instructive and suggestive—*instructive* in the summaries it gives of the outstanding qualities of the great musicians, and *suggestive* in the comparisons it makes with other arts. Even if he cannot always accept the comparisons as valid, it is at least good for him to consider them, and the references to the effect of political changes on artistic activity are valuable.

The book is written from a German point of view, which is the easier since the bulk of the great music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is of German origin. There is thus no danger that we shall miss the peaks. But it is a pity that a work written in English should make so little mention of England's contribution. Dunstable is mentioned and Purcell, but there is not a word about the Elizabethans and nothing about the composers of our own time, apart from a casual reference to Delius, "who is called an English composer". This balance of interest is no doubt salutary for English readers who are accustomed to be spoon-fed with praise of their own composers ; but they would like to know more certainly whether the author's silence is due to an unfavourable estimate or to incomplete knowledge. Dr. Leichtentritt would probably reply that he has space only to treat of the great, and this he does very ably, even though one may question Reger's right to a place in the company and may doubt whether eroticism is the complete clue to Mozart's art. Mozart, indeed, fares less happily than some other composers in the summary of achievements. When Dr. Leichtentritt says of him that he "was so thoroughly a child of the dying rococo age that the rude shocks of the French Revolution were a fatal blow to him", he retires into a cloudy world of words where the precise reader will be unable to follow him. Nor is the relationship between Mozart and Haydn to be dismissed with the phrase : "As a composer of sonatas Mozart supplements Haydn".

Where matters of fact are concerned Dr. Leichtentritt is in general a sound and careful guide ; but it is curious to find Giovanni Gabrieli described as "a younger colleague of Monteverdi", and Brahms died not in 1896 but in 1897. The reference to Mirabeau as the author of the "famous play, 'The Marriage of Figaro'", which "served as a libretto for one of Mozart's most delightful operas", also seems to call for some explanation.

J. A. W.

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*Music by Heart.* By Liliás Mackinnon. pp. 141. (Oxford University Press, 1938) 5s.

This book ranges, in somewhat casual discursiveness, a good deal farther than its title. Miss Mackinnon is a teacher of wide experience ; and in her pages not only the pianist but also the organist, the string player, the singer and the conductor may find many useful hints on many varied subjects unconnected with memorizing. Nevertheless, she always returns, sooner or later, to what is after all her main theme. It is one of much interest, and she discusses it in close and practical detail : she knows the difficulties, and suggests an abundance of well-devised methods for overcoming them. On the assumption that musical performance by heart is requisite, her pages are a compendious and serviceable guide ; and a special word of praise is due to the admirable index.

Nevertheless, there is something else to be said, something that Miss Mackinnon passes over very lightly—necessarily so, perhaps, as to dwell on it might seem discouraging to the students for whose assistance the book is written. But it is fundamental.

Historically, performance without notes is, as Miss Mackinnon points out, a comparatively modern fashion : it dates, she says, from the time of Liszt. To put things bluntly, it had its birth in personal showmanship, not in any artistic need. And the fashion, for a considerable time confined to instrumental soloists, has spread rapidly. Very many concert singers now voluntarily undertake what is compulsory for their operatic brothers and sisters ; a fair number of conductors leave their scores at home ; some string quartet parties deny themselves the still customary luxury of desks. There is a story that, at a London concert, Mendelssohn played the pianoforte part of one of his own trios, the score of which had been mislaid, with a volume of Beethoven before him, the leaves solemnly manipulated from time to time by the official turner-over : it was not for him to let it be known that he was playing by heart when his colleagues were not. Mendelssohn was a gentleman ; but his example has not always been followed by violinists who play duet-sonatas in which their colleague occupies an equal artistic position. Apart from considerations of artistic fashions and showmanship, performance by heart has some obvious practical advantages ; there is no necessity to enter into them. But the point is this : until comparatively recently musical performances (off the stage, that is to say) seem to have progressed comfortably enough without these advantages ; for them we have now to pay a price, and is perhaps the price somewhat over-heavy ?

Even for the best memorizers some regrettable limitation of repertoire is inevitable. And not even the best memory is infallible. A kindly and efficient orchestra will cover a conductor's mistakes, and a pianist's nerve will probably carry him somehow over unexpected stiles ; but every accompanist has stories of hairbreadth escapes to tell. And even if nothing happens that is palpable to the average listener, memorized performances are only too often accurate in little or nothing but the notes : how often, for example, do we hear in a concert-room all the curiously varied and delicately subtle dynamic shadings of Chopin's C major study, Op. 10 No. 7 ? And there is the question of mental strain. We may perhaps argue, if we like, that it is a healthy strain to memorize Beethoven's Op. 106 sonata ; but there is certainly nothing

musically advantageous in memorizing the second violin part of the 'Grosse Fuge'.

It seems to me of the highest artistic importance that critics and the public should not in this matter set standards : no one should be praised for performing by heart or blamed for not doing so. Musicians vary greatly in their capacity for something that is in itself a very small matter : let each do as he likes. But let us all come down heavily on sins due to unnecessary memorizing : and, above all, let us remember that the artist is the vehicle of music to be heard, and not somebody to be looked at. Miss Mackinnon says (p. 3) "all should bear in mind that television is coming, and to stay" : in so fearsome a world there will be no place for music as such. *Absit omen!*

E. W.

*The Training and Conducting of Choral Societies.* By Harvey Grace. pp. 70. (Novello, London, 1938) 2s.

Those who have followed the fortunes of the competition-festival movement will not need to be told with what authority the author of this manual speaks. It is designed to supersede a former 'Handbook for Choralists' and contains material from articles in 'The Musical Times'. It is a treatise for those in charge more than for those who form the choral body itself. ". . . of course, much depends on the conductor's manner of approach". Everything, one may be permitted to emend, for if that be not right the whole apple-cart will be upset. So let him who runs a choral society read the chapter on conducting, for instance, and discover thereafter for himself how to combine a private meekness of disposition with a manner in which authority is never allowed to degenerate into arrogance or decline towards the pretentious.

S. G.

*Decibels and Phons : a Musical Analogy.* By Lt. S. Lloyd. pp. 18. (Oxford University Press, 1938) 1s. 6d.

This paper, part of which appeared in 'The Musical Times', December 1937, explains the nature of the phon, the new scientific unit of loudness, and its relation to an earlier unit, the decibel. The author deals with matters that, although well known to the student of acoustics, are as yet unfamiliar to many musicians. For instance, we all know in a vague way that doubling a part does not make it twice as loud ; actually, in scientific terminology, it adds three phons to the loudness, a curious and surprising result to arrive at ! The normal way of deriving this figure is by using logarithms, but the author has devised an ingenious way by which the reader can obtain the same result by counting up major thirds.

As an illustration of a different aspect of the same problem, a watch ticking three feet away has a loudness of 30 phons ; the noise of a busy street is in the neighbourhood of 75 phons. Now the scientist has excellent reasons for adopting the scale that leads to these values, but it is obviously of little direct use to the musician, for such figures would not adequately convey to him the relative magnitudes of the two sounds ; they are not as 30 to 75, but as *ppp* to *f*—a seemingly far greater ratio. Still, the decibel and the phon supply a foundation on which future developments

will certainly be built, and the reader who does not know of these matters cannot do better than read this little book ; it supplies a welcome link between the scientific and the musical study of sound.

E. O. T.

*Gabriel Fauré et ses mélodies.* By Vladimir Jankélévitch. pp. 250. (Plon, Paris, 1938.)

This is in many ways an attractive and useful book, though a little inflated and thus not very inviting reading. Without covering much more space the author might have produced a study of Gabriel Fauré's work as a whole, of which indeed he shows a remarkably intimate knowledge. He is always ready to draw comparisons between this or that song and the piano music, the chamber works, the Requiem, 'Pénélope'—in fact anything in the Fauréan catalogue, so that his excellent material could have been made to cover all of it and the detailed discussion of song after song, which in the end produces a feeling of congestion, could have been avoided. On the other hand the absence of a complete list of the songs, with opus numbers, dates and names of poets, is maddening.

But taking M. Jankélévitch's work for what it is, one cannot fail to derive much profit from even the casual and incomplete perusal that will be all to which it is likely to tempt most readers, nor to credit Fauré's account with that profit. The most French of French masters is shown convincingly as a song-writer who may rank with the finest, not in range or profundity, but in quality, and rank with them not because he is like them, but precisely because he is different. The others—Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Wolf (from whose works, by the way, the author quotes like a connoisseur)—give us all we can expect from the German *Lied* ; but Fauré is the ideal exponent of the French *mélodie*, which is a vastly different thing, and so stands eminent in his own right. The others, one may venture to paraphrase the argument, are the product of a natural growth, of the people ; he is the representative of a civilization, of a society.

If only M. Jankélévitch would leave it at that ! But, although he recognizes the fact and is pleased with it, he has his moments when he wants Fauré to represent the universe, which to any dispassionate observer he obviously does not. The comparison on the last page but one with Beethoven ("to love whom it is not necessary to be a musician, indeed, when all is said, preferable not to be one, so impure is his art, so encumbered with humanity, sociology and metaphysics") is uncalled for : it is rather like talking in the same breath of Rembrandt and of Marie Laurencin, whose delicious lemon, pistachio and strawberry ice-cream colours somehow resemble Fauré's cool and pale art. But while M. Jankélévitch would probably not agree that the qualities of this art are limitations, his discourse nevertheless confirms the conviction that these limitations are precisely what make Fauré's music so endearing. Without such salutary restraints he would only have been another Liszt, whom one is surprised to find dragged into the discussion of so much finer an artist in and out of season and called "Franz" with affectionate familiarity. (My fault, no doubt, but I thought at first the author had turned his argument to Robert Franz.)

Unfortunately, instead of frankly recognizing that Fauré lacked certain attributes (grandeur, passion, command of large form) which have never done any harm to the greatest composers but might have made an artist of the second rank like himself unlovable, he goes and asks us to regard his constraining refinements as due to *pudeur*—dreaded word that has become a traditional tag of so much French writing on French music and recurs, alas ! on every twentieth page or so of this book. How one hates this word, which has covered such a multitude of defects, from trifling elegance to sterility. And it simply will not account for Fauré's virtues, nor excuse his faults. We are told that it does not suffice to let the composer contain his passionate exultation in 'La Bonne Chanson', a song-cycle as characteristic as anything he wrote, and it will not do to make this pudicity (I use the horrid word on purpose, though what is meant is "decency" or "discretion") responsible for Fauré's bare and reserved late manner or to represent him in his old age as "turning a deaf ear to adorable temptations" and determined not to listen to "the melodious sirens of pleasure". A better service and greater justice could have been done to the later cycles, 'La Chanson d'Eve' and 'Le Jardin clos', by drawing attention to the fact that they exude a new kind of charm, no less seductive than the old, but appealing only to more refined sensibilities. Any kind of creative activity means passion, even if it does not result in passionate expression. Let us hear no more of this lukewarm emotional chastity we have been asked *ad nauseam* to believe is the peculiar virtue of French artists.

When M. Jankélévitch permits himself to be original and to cut himself adrift from these false critical conventions, he can find any amount of suggestive observations to make. Moreover, he is extremely well informed, generally and specially, and he wields a delightfully obedient and graceful pen. He can hit upon a phrase that is both true and striking, as when, in describing Fauré's artful way of modulating away from a key only to turn back to it on the sly, he calls him "a virtuoso of mock-clumsiness". He is right, too, when he shows Fauré to be a singularly pure musician by pointing out that in his songs he uses the material of music unencumbered by literary or other extra-musical suggestions ; that, although he draws upon poetry for his inspiration, he never makes his settings into anything like programmatic symphonic poems. Which no doubt explains the truth of the author's assertion that Fauré rarely set a really great poem.

M. Jankélévitch is not altogether uncritical, though it is amusing to read in one place : ". . . let us permit ourselves to deplore . . .", with a very mild stricture following. A writer on philosophy, he is nevertheless well versed in musical science and terminology. In short his equipment as a music critic is complete—prejudices and all. The 172 musical quotations are well chosen. How very curious, though, that although the majority are taken, of course, from songs, in not a single one of them does a voice-part appear.

E. B.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

*The Old Hall Manuscript.* Transcribed and Edited by Alexander Ramsbotham. Completed by H. B. Collins and Dom Anselm Hughes. Vol. III. (Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, London, 1938.)

Some thirty years ago a group of singers at a concert were singing the Roy Henry Sanctus, when one of the masters turned to his companion and said "What is this stuff?" "Pre-Reformation music" said the friend. "No wonder there was a Reformation!" came the retort. This joke persisted for a long time afterwards. About the same time a small boy at the same school used to gaze upon a manuscript with awe mingled with pride. He had the conviction that some day justice would be done and the joke reversed. Now, with the publication of the final volume of the Old Hall Manuscript, that hope has been fulfilled.

As the small boy gazed at the manuscript he saw reflected in it the course of English history, for the manuscript—parts of it at any rate—must have known the Battle of Agincourt, the martyrdom of St. Joan and the beginning of the Wars of the Roses. While all these events were in progress men were in a different way making history, resolving their canons and perfecting their cadences and, above all, singing the praises of God.

A good deal of political history is now being rewritten in the light of new research and one hopes that musical history will follow. Some may have felt that Professor Wooldridge was too dogmatic in his disparaging of the English school and that his judgment was premature, for he could not have studied this manuscript in detail. It has taken just nine years of hard endeavour to complete the work which now appears in modern dress for all to see. The Plainsong and Medieval Society is to be congratulated on its tenacity of purpose in undertaking this task with very slender means. We are accustomed to receive from the Society works of good, sound scholarship, and the present volume is in keeping with the tradition. The editors have performed their task with considerable ability and have stated their conclusions with a modesty which becomes their skill. It would be presumption, naked and unashamed, for any one to differ seriously from them, and the critic who looks for faults is going to be greatly disappointed, unless he is pacified by the wrong reference on page 15 of the Introduction. Without making invidious distinctions, it must be conceded that the honours go to Mr. H. B. Collins, who has been responsible for the musical section and for the corrections to the previous volumes.

Within certain limits there will still be room for difference of opinion. Dom Anselm Hughes contends that certain parts are intended for instruments alone. The record of this experiment is interesting but, as far as the present writer is concerned, quite unconvincing. Nor is the vexed question of *musica ficta* ever likely to be finally settled. The

'Benedictus' by Typp on page 31 is clearly in F and the late Sir Richard Terry has it so in his scoring of the work. Most students will agree that "Roy Henry" is Henry VI, though it is possible that the scribe was merely joking and that the composer's real name was Henry King.

One commends this book to the earnest attention of all students. It contains a galaxy of names—the evidence of a forgotten school, for school it was. Not all these men were circumscribed by the confines of Windsor. Dunstable's composition is here, though it is not named. Power (or Leonel) remains a name and nothing more, though he is represented in the Selden Manuscript and at Trent and Bologna. Cooke, Damett and Sturgeon were without doubt versatile and resourceful. That the fame of these men was national and not local is hardly to be doubted, and the interesting evidence of ADD. MS. 40011 B shows that Rowland's 'Gloria' was known and copied elsewhere than at Windsor. The 'Sanctus' and the 'Credo' in this manuscript also form part of the Old Hall Manuscript.

Musically the work is uneven, as is only to be expected in a volume ranging over nearly a century. Yet it should be remembered that this music was intended for singing not on the concert platform but in church. Experience in this case is the best guide. Here at Westminster, Typp and Power and Chirbury are honoured names and their works are sung regularly throughout the year. To men accustomed to Byrd, Taverner and Fayrfax the transition is not great, and the simple settings of the 'Sanctus' and the 'Agnus' have a quiet simplicity and dignity as much in keeping with the great building and the ancient sacrifice as the vestments and the chant. There are times when the great masses of Palestrina hold sway, and when Tye's 'Euge Bone' fills the air with the joy of living. But there are times when Europe is alive with threats of war; when all is noise and hurry in the London streets. It may happen then that the worshipper coming in from all this will find himself listening to the strains of Typp and Power melting away in the great arches as they did in Gothic cathedrals five hundred years ago.

L. L.

*Latin Church Music of the Polyphonic Schools.* Edited by H. B. Collins.  
Hassler, Hans Leo, *Ave maris stella*, Vesper Hymn, 4 voices.  
Ingegneri, Marc Antonio, *Lucis Creator optime*, Vesper Hymn, 4 voices.  
(Chester, London) 4d. each.

The second of these hymns is rather impersonal, exhibiting no traits which single it out for special mention. Hassler's work is in a different category. Idiomatically it differs little from Ingegneri's, but from the first progression one is conscious of a definite personality. We ought to know more of this composer, whose output includes masses, madrigals, motets, canzonettas and five collections of German and Latin secular songs.

E. R.

Beck, Conrad, *Ecce gratum*. Latin song-play from the 'Carmina Burana'; for Schools. Vocal Score. (Hug, Zürich.)

There is little evidence here of the quality noticed in other works by this composer. It appears to have been thrown off with little thought,

and its simplicity is sterile and self-conscious, fitting ill with the clear spring-like and spontaneous quality of the words. To a certain extent the composer felt the need for clear unadorned writing of a severely diatonic nature, but what slovenly support, harmonically and rhythmically, he gives to the modal vocal line! The work was written, presumably, for performance in high schools, but it does not seem to contain elements conducive to popularity in such places.

E. R.

Fesch, Willem de, *Two Sonatas* for cello and piano. Edited by Julius van Etsen. (De Ring, Antwerp.)

Although de Fesch (1687-1760) was a Fleming by birth, these two Sonatas, with four others, were actually first published in London by John Johnson in Cheapside. The re-issue of two of them should lead to the publication of more of this composer's work, for he certainly had melodic gifts of a high order. The style of these Sonatas is Handelian, but there is ample evidence of personality in unexpected figurations, abrupt key-changes and wide leaps. The piano part has been excellently realized from the *basso continuo* by the editor. Cellists will enjoy every note of these Sonatas.

E. R.

Gossec, François Joseph, *Symphony*, D major. Edited by Adam Carse. Full Score. (Augener, London) 3s.

This is a further addition to the excellent series of 'Early Classical Symphonies'. It follows familiar enough patterns, but there is a nice avoidance of squareness, the prevailing fault of much mid-eighteenth century music, and the writing, simple though it is, is full of charm and piquancy. There may be no undiscovered masterpieces belonging to this period, but we owe a debt to Mr. Carse for bringing to light such a store of delightful symphonic miniatures. By their publication the repertory of the amateur orchestra is considerably enlarged. The present Symphony has three well-contrasted movements.

E. R.

Green, Maurice, *Lord, let me know mine end*. Anthem for S.A.T.B. and organ. Edited by Ernest Bullock. (Oxford University Press) 6d.

This is a beautiful piece of writing. Its virtuosity is not apparent in any contrapuntal sense, but rather in a concentration of purpose that is able to fix a *Largo* pace for eleven pages of score, and an undeviating crotchet pulse in the bass line, and withal avoid monotony. I have nothing but the highest opinion of this anthem.

E. R.

Gurney, Ivor, *Twenty Songs*. Two Volumes. (Oxford University Press) 5s. each.

We have it on the authority of responsible musicians that the twenty songs contained in these two volumes represent the best of Gurney's art in song-writing. Judgment is, therefore, now possible upon the work of a composer whose fate was one of the major tragedies of English musical history. If Wolf's mind became similarly obscured, it can at any rate be maintained as a mitigating factor that he had done his best work, and

that his reason remained unclouded long enough for his genius to become fully manifested. But Gurney was afflicted before his powers of musical organization had fully developed. The lyrical outpouring was therefore subjected to no very mature criticism. There is hardly a song in the present volumes that does not suffer somewhere from this uncritical acceptance of ideas that belong to a common lyrical stock rather than to a definite personality. A striking case is 'The Latmian Shepherd'. At the words, "Now the poet drops his pen And moves about like other men" the music is commonplace to a degree, whereas the ending of the song is superb. Similarly, 'All Night under the Moon' starts with a beautiful vocal line that completely degenerates at the words, "Over the meadows of June". Careless, too, at times, are the word accentuations, such as the setting of the line "As serving wenches to princesses crowned" in 'A Sword'. For me, the one perfect song in the twenty is 'Last Hours' to John Freeman's words. This is unfaltering in its evocation of a mood, and moves to its beautiful close with an air of absolute assurance. Here is the promise of what Gurney could have achieved.

E. R.

Janáček, Leoš, *On an Overgrown Path*. Ten pieces for piano. Two Vols. (Hudební Matica, Prague.)

Here is some delightful music, simply conceived and requiring only a moderate technique for performance. Its individuality comes from no exploitation of strange harmonic and melodic systems, but from a highly personal use of classical tonalities. In the seventh piece, 'Good Night', the first twenty-seven bars are mainly based on a simple alternation of the tonic triads of C major and B minor; but how fascinating and delightful is the result! I can heartily recommend these volumes to teachers and pianists.

E. R.

Rathaus, Karol, *String Quartet No. 3*. Score. (Oxford University Press)

5s.

This composer's manipulative powers are certainly developed to a high degree. It is, however, regrettable that the energy involved in the pursuit of such "chessboard art" should produce so little of vital significance. There is grim determination here but, as a goal is missing, the music moves from point to point round the arc of a circle, instead of developing to an inevitable close. The factor that produces this hesitancy is the lack of melodic ideas in the work. No degree of technical mastery can offset this lack, or give organic impulse to something that is but the product of a wide reading in modern music. The Quartet is in five movements: *Andantino*, *Sarabande*, *Allegro*, *Episode (adagio)* and *Allegro*.

E. R.

Rawsthorne, Alan, *Theme and Variations* for two Violins. (Oxford University Press, London) 3s. 6d.

When this work was performed at this year's London meeting of the I.S.C.M. the programme note rather curiously stated that "the composer is convinced that the theme appears in each variation", the implication being that there might be some doubt in the listener's mind as to the

close relationship between the theme and its nine variations. Such a doubt, however, does not arise from even a superficial examination of the score. Variations such as the first (*Capriccietto*), fourth (*Rhapsodia*) and fifth (*Notturno*) are developed from parts of the theme taken away from the context ; the second (*Siciliano*), sixth (*Scherzetto*) and seventh (*Ostinato*) are based on rhythmic alterations of the melodic line of the theme ; the third (*Cancrizzante*) and eighth (*Canone*) are contrapuntal variations, while the ninth (*Fantasia*) is mainly retrospective. If the process by which each variation is started on its way is conscious and intellectual rather than emotional, the composer's ingenuity has countered the dryness usually associated with such music, and has conjured up many incidental charms. Cases in point are the overlapping major thirds in the *Rhapsodia*, and the cadences in the *Canone* and *Cancrizzante*. What seem of less interest are the middle sections of the theme and many of the variations. In such places the initial impulse has so weakened that contrapuntal resource is called upon to carry the music through. Violinists will find the work full of interest.

E. R.

Schütz, Heinrich, *The St. Matthew Passion*. Edited with English Words by H. M. Adams. Vocal Score. (Oxford University Press) 2s. 6d.

The problem of the persistence of works by the so-called lesser masters is a very difficult one for the general musician. The historian explores these foothills that lie around the peaks we call Palestrina, J. S. Bach, Haydn, and uncards a gem such as this 1666 Passion by Schütz. We look at it and wonder. It has great beauty, it is eminently singable, it is in fact far from being a historical curiosity merely, having as it does an emotional quality to which we of this century can react quickly and sensitively. How is it, then, that it has become overshadowed by the later greatness to which it led, of which it was the necessary precursor ? It is we who have allowed that to happen, either through lack of opportunity or through laziness. The same thoughts were aroused at the Cambridge Festival in August, where we found ourselves listening for the first time to many elegant and beautiful things and being constrained to revise our scale of values as regards Tudor music. Such revaluations, disturbing though they be to our self-complacency, are salutary. On the whole they leave unimpaired the position of the great masters, such figures owing their eminence to some rare quality of which the technique of expression is only a part. Bach remains where he is and Schütz can never reach thither. But looking at p. 27 ff. of this score, where the mocking chorus "Thou that destroyest the temple" is set, one sees how, although the dramatic character of the scene is completely ignored, the musical quality of the writing has immense dignity and the line "come down from the cross" such poignancy that one momentarily forgets that there should be a sneer behind that ejaculation. There Schütz appears as the splendid musical figure he was and there the difference is made apparent between him and the more vital personality who was to follow him. Such thoughts the present edition of the Passion bring to the surface. It is to be hoped that choral societies will take advantage of the carefully prepared performing score that is now rendered available. It is an example of editing in the only right sense of the term. The inclusion of the original text would have been welcome.

S. G.

Steffani, Agostino, *Stabat Mater* for 6 solo voices, 6-part chorus, strings and organ. Edited by Charles Kennedy Scott. Vocal Score (Oxford University Press) 5s.

All the average musician knows about the diplomat, priest and mathematician Steffani (1654-1728) as a composer is that his chamber duets influenced Handel when he wrote a large series of works of a similar kind—which the average musician does *not* know. For that reason alone it would be worth having one of his important works available in a good modern edition. But this 'Stabat Mater' is a specimen of pre-Handelian oratorio which greatly deserved a revival for its own sake, not only in print, but in performance, as that given under Mr. Kennedy Scott's direction at the London Museum on November 25th 1936 showed.

The work, compared with Handel, seems archaic, with its modal inflections, and the influence appears here to amount to almost nothing apart from an exemplary way of keeping vocal and orchestral polyphonic strains flowing, as often as not independently of each other, with an effect of richness and suavity. But Steffani contrasts even more strikingly with the Italian masters of oratorio immediately preceding his generation, such as Carissimi and Legrenzi. He is distinguished from them by a modern, personal, romantic manner of expression which is still capable of gripping the hearer's imagination irresistibly and can at times become as poignant as anything in Verdi's *Requiem*. The final cadences of the soprano duet at the end of No. 6 and of the trio for alto, tenor and bass, No. 8, for instance, are arrestingly beautiful, especially the latter, where the wailing chromatic descents produce the most astonishing harmonic transitions. This setting of "fac me tecum plangere", indeed, makes one think of Bach's 'Crucifixus' and ask oneself what, after all, the difference between such a master and a composer like Steffani can be. For the latter also has any amount of technical mastery. The conversion of a fugue into a double fugue in the final number by the introduction of a second subject through the orchestra alone is accomplished with a skill comparable only to that of the greatest. Yet a difference there is between Bach and this Interesting Historical Figure, as Sir Donald Tovey would doubtless label Steffani, and it is mainly this, I think : the I.H.F. cannot resist an epigram, whereas the great B. can, and constantly does for the sake of planning his music in large surfaces. A minor figure of Steffani's standing momentarily forgets the effect of his structure when he wants to make an impression with what amounts only to a decoration. And so it is with other I.H.F.'s, as I think Sir Donald would agree. They are often far more original than the great masters, but . . . No, I cannot go so far with Sir Donald as to say that they cannot compose. Steffani certainly could, in his own fashion, which is more than good enough while one listens to such a work as this 'Stabat Mater'.

Mr. Kennedy Scott's edition seems to be admirably adapted to all practical purposes.

E. B.

Strauss, Richard, *Friedenstag*. Opera in one Act, Op. 81. Vocal Score.  
*Peace Day*. English libretto by Richard Capell. (Fürstner, Berlin and London.)

The latest Strauss opera, produced in Munich on July 24th last, has little that is new to show except the librettist, Joseph Gregor, who has

also supplied the composer with words for the next work, 'Daphne', and seems to serve him well, now that Hofmannsthal is no more and the association with Stefan Zweig has been officially pronounced undesirable. The simple story of the last day of the Thirty Years' War in the citadel of a beleaguered German town, picturesque, touching, without subtlety but sufficiently eventful, makes an excellent libretto, and Gregor writes a plain-sailing German that lends itself well to a musical setting because it leaves the composer free to charge it with touches of his own imagination. (This lucid and downright quality of the original is admirably preserved in Richard Capell's capital translation, which has also the merit of fitting the melodic accent nearly always ideally and never less than well.) As a demonstration of the futility of a war lasting thirty years—or indeed a war of any duration—let us hope this opera will do the modern world some good.

But we are interested mainly in Strauss's music. At any rate we should like to be. It is difficult, unfortunately. This opera is the real thing, the real Strauss, but it contains nothing he has not done better before and would have done rather too often even without this work. Not that one had expected him, at his age, to try out new ways and means, and one respects him for having held through thick and thin to a strictly diatonic system in which, for all his harmonic trials and errors of the past, he has always believed as the ultimate musical state of grace. (There is a coda of 38 bars of virginal C major, unspotted by a single accidental, at the end of this opera, as though peace could not be perfect as long as there are any flats and sharps about.) Even extreme modulations are often strictly diatonic : Strauss's habit of jerking a passage suddenly and bodily from a given key into one that is chromatically but not harmonically its neighbour, without attempting the least chordal transition, has become more than ever a mannerism. But then nearly everything in this score gives the impression of being simply the product of an admirable technique that works almost automatically and does not need the pressure of inspiration to keep it going.

Even so, Strauss still has his old secret of sometimes producing an almost ecstatic feeling of excitement or exultation in the hearer in a way that, at any rate theatrically, makes its effect with unfailing sureness, and although incidents of real dramatic tension or release are rare in this work, he can still induce a thrill once or twice, as at the expectant moment before the liberating cannon shots are heard in the distance or, when all is said, in the triumphant C majorage at the end. And, so far as one can judge from the vocal score, he has greatly simplified and clarified his operatic workmanship. There are fewer representative themes and, if the piano arrangement may be regarded as reasonably complete, the texture is not extravagantly shot through with thematic complexities, nor the orchestration, in all probability, exorbitant. Still, when these virtues have been enumerated, one cannot fail to realize that they are largely negative.

E. B.

Vecchi, Orazio, *L'Amfiparnaso : commedia armonica*. Edited in facsimile and in modern score by Carlo Perinello. (Casa Editrice 'La Zarlina', Milan, 1938) Limited Edition of 400 copies. Lire 390.

This is the first complete edition of a work which, although unknown

to the majority of musicians, has always been considered by musicologists as a masterpiece of its kind. The work, although styled "commedia armonica" and divided into three acts and a prologue, is not to be considered as an opera, or as a work to be performed on the stage at all.<sup>11)</sup> There is no orchestral support for the voices, and the chief characters always sing with a choral background (soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and an additional part called *quinto* that may belong to either tenor or soprano). The work is thus more a series of madrigals than a unified opera of the type of Monteverdi's 'Orfeo'. The characterization is, nevertheless, vivid, and the realism is accentuated by the use of various dialects: for instance, Captain Cardone uses an Italianized Spanish, Zanni the Bergamask dialect and others the Tuscan, while a Jewish chorus adds a bizarre element. The spirited and humorous nature of the libretto is reflected in music of a like nature, and where sorrowful strains are needed Vecchi supplies music as deeply expressive as anything found in the work of his more famous contemporaries. Indeed, the astonishing thing about 'L'Amfiparnaso' is a range of emotion that embraces the extremes of sorrow and joy, and I do not doubt that its publication will result in rescuing Vecchi from the hands of musicologists and placing him among the hierarchy of the great. Technically, too, he does astonishing things: consecutive triads in root position, extraordinary changes of tonality and a rhythmic freedom that would shame many moderns are all found in profusion. In order to make the accents clear to modern singers the editor has not scrupled to change the bar-lengths frequently, but his over-zealous wish to clarify matters has, in one or two cases, led to ocular confusion. The use of the figure 3 over a succession of notes has for us come to mean either three in the time of two or three in the time of four, but its use here is merely an accentual one, i.e. the first of the three notes is the one to be accented. An accent mark would have been sufficient and not so confusing to the eye. At times this rhythmic element is used for realistic purposes, as at the words "mai si, che suna la campana", where the chorus has syncopated bell-rhythms. Did space permit I could quote endlessly from the harmonic and melodic felicities in the score, but I hope that my enthusiasm for the work will send the reader direct to it, when he can gloat over it at leisure. If it did not seem facetious to suggest it, I should recommend that the work be performed at a B.B.C. Contemporary Music Concert to show how a sixteenth-century Italian could write modern music!

This edition contains, as well as full and short scores, the libretto and a reproduction in facsimile of the first printing of the work (Venice, 1597). The proof-reading has not been as careful as it might have been.

E. R.

<sup>11)</sup> But see C. Perinello's Opinion, 'Music and Letters,' October 1937, p. 439—Ed.

## REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

*Der Dreiklang.* Vienna. November 1937—February 1938.

Heinrich Schenker : *Ein Kommentar zu Schindler, Beethovens Spiel betreffend.* Oswald Jonas : *Nachtrag zu Schenkens Aufsatz über Schindler.* Otto Vriesländer : *Eine Stelle aus Chopins Scherzo, Op. 54.*

The first article examines in detail and in an interesting manner Schindler's reports on Beethoven's playing of the E major sonata, Op. 14. The whole thing is an extraordinarily illuminating *aperçu* of pianistic method from a source of the highest importance. The following article takes a wider field and examines what is reported from various sources of the method of others besides Beethoven. This number begins with the ominous statement that publication is henceforth to cease. And so another Viennese venture comes to an end. We could have wished it otherwise.

S. G.

*Deutsche Musikkultur.* Cassel. April 1938.

Wilhelm Ehmann : *Musikwissenschaft und musikalische Volkskunde.* Hans Klotz : *Die Kleinorgel, eine Aufgabe unserer Zeit.* Kurt Huber und Walther Wünsch : *Bosnienfahrt.* Emil Seiling : *Erinnerungen an Max Bruch.* Rudolf Eras : *Das Vogtland als Heimat der deutschen Instrumentenbaukunst.* Carl Clewing : *Deutsche Osterlieder.*

At the beginning of this number stands part of Herr Hitler's historic speech at Linz on March 12th. Next a canon (musical) to the words "Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern". The reminiscences of Max Bruch date from 1908, when the writer first met him in Berlin. Bruch was then one of the heads of the Hochschule and had twelve more years of life before him. As a *document pour servir* the article, with great names such as Brahms and even Bismarck mentioned, is of value. Rudolf Eras's contribution is an interesting and pleasing description of a flourishing local industry.

June-July.

*Geleitworte.* Kurt Huber : *Volkslied und Volkstanz im Bajuvarischen Raum.* Carl Clewing : *Deutsche Kulturpropaganda im Oesterreich der letzten Jahre.* Hans Joachim Moser : *Kaiser Maximilian I. und sein Komponist.* Karl Lütge : *Ein unbekanntes Beethovenbildnis A. von Kloebers aus Mödling bei Wien.* Georg Schünemann : *Beethovens Wohnungen in Wien.* Fritz Chlodwig Lange : *Niedersachsenlied und Radetzky-Marsch.*

After a set of sentences celebrating the end of Austria and the beginning of Ostmark, the delicious illustrations (musical) to the first article seem to come from some distant era of friendliness and peace. This article is very attractive as well as informative. The one on propaganda from the Nazi side in Austria is important as a political

document. The composer told of in Moser's article is Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1571), whom Grove speaks of as being "the first of Germany's masters of music". This article is copiously illustrated. The paper dealing with Beethoven portraits has as its starting point a new variant of Kloeber's well-known head, lately discovered in Berlin.

S. G.

*Modern Music*. New York. March-April 1938.

Alfred Einstein : *Cycle of Three Centuries*. Charles C. Cushing : *Maurice Ravel* : 1875-1937. Roger Sessions : *To Revitalize Opera*. Paul Rosenfeld : *The Newest American Composers*. Virgil Thomson : *Swing Again*. Elliott Carter : *Orchestras and Audiences*, Winter 1938. Lazare Saminsky : *Electric Marvels in Pittsburgh*. Grigori Schnneerson : *Shostakowitch Rehabilitated*.

Alfred Einstein compares to-day with three hundred years ago and has some arresting things to say. The Ravel article ends with this : "He was, in Gautier's phrase, the supreme *gardien du contour pur*", which is a label as true as it is well found. Thomson on swing has a good description of a "jam session" which he says "invariably sounds not unlike a Brandenburg Concerto, where every voice wiggles around as rapidly as you please, the rhythmic basis or centre remaining completely static and without progression or development of any kind". It describes perfectly the devastating harmonic anaemia of the jam session. The article on new American composers hails David Diamond (b. 1916) as a prodigy of a wonderful prolificacy "not incomparable to Schubert's". Session's article on opera confirms one's opinion that he is one of the most intelligent writers on music in America to-day.

May-June.

Roman Clemens : *Décors for Hindemith's 'Mathis der Maler'*. Roger Sessions : *Vienna—Vale, Ave*. Raymond Hall : *The 'Macbeth' of Bloch*. C. M. Cristini : *Designs for 'Macbeth'*. John A. Gutman : *Casting the Film Composer*. William Schuman : *Unconventional Case History*. Elliott Carter : *Season's End, New York, Spring 1938*. Kurt List : *Political Art—Notes on Klenck's 'Karl V'*.

Roger Sessions's article contains the phrase "but I believe it is quite clear that if music is to have a future it lies in the United States". In other words, what Vienna loses, New York gains. It may be so, and if we are to listen to any one prophesying on that question, let it be Mr. Sessions, for he can generally be trusted to know what is what. The note on film music has this : "Korda's other Wellsian fantasy, 'Things to come', was given to Bliss. Not a bad choice, this". One rubbed one's ears. Was this a leg-pull? One read on : "... but then the boredom of such an everlasting film was so overwhelming that even Stravinsky in his most ingenious mood . . .". Stravinsky ingenious? That superb mass of monotony ingenious in mood? After all, then, it was meant as a leg-pull. Why, Stravinsky is about as *photogénique* as Guillaume de Machaut. The note on Bloch's 'Macbeth' is informative and a useful preparation to what one hopes will be a quickly approaching performance here.

S. G.

*Musica d'oggi*. Milan. May 1938.

R. de Renis : *Ettore Romagnoli e la musica*. E. Oddone : *La musica nell' educazione dell' infanzia*.

Ettore Romagnoli's special provinces were Greek tragedy, folksong and the borderlands of music and poetry in general. He will probably be remembered chiefly for his popularization in Italy of the Greek classic dramas—he produced 'The Clouds' at Padua as long ago as 1911; but he is commemorated in this obituary article mainly as a valued contributor to 'Musica d'oggi'. Oddone's article is devoted rather belatedly to the Prague Congress of 1936.

June.

P. Macari : *Canti etnici di Ausonia e di Castelnuovo Parano*. V. Sechi : *La musica a Roma nelle sale della Mostra Augustea*. P. Dotto : *Giovanni Paisiello*.

The Paisiello article, mainly biographical and hardly more informative than the article in 'Grove', usefully draws attention to the Neapolitan composer's instrumental music, twelve symphonies and twelve string quartets—"beautiful and valuable classical music"—which, Dotto suggests, would repay study and revival.

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Macari completes his account of these local folksongs, collected by himself and here printed for the first time. As he points out, they are notable for "the total absence of melodic ornaments, tonal alterations, and of technical virtuosity such as one finds in the folk music of other parts of Italy". Mazzi's article has already appeared in the Paris 'Monde Musical'.

G. A.

*Musica Hebraica*. Jerusalem. July 1938. Nos. 1-2.

Joseph Yasser : *Foundations of Jewish Harmony*. Darius Milhaud : *La Musique Juive au Comtat Venaissin*. Edith Gerson-Kiwi : *Jerusalem Archives for Oriental Music*.

This is a new periodical, unique in many ways. First, this musical publication is edited by a dental surgeon and a newspaper reporter; secondly, it is devoted entirely to Jewish interests and printed in Hebrew, English, French and German. The most interesting among some rather uncritical and confused articles is Yasser's study. The New York scholar describes how his search after a perfect harmonic system for melodies based on the pentatonic scale (*cf.* his book, 'A Theory of Evolving Tonality') brought him first to Chinese and then to old Russian, Negro and Gregorian material. He has no doubt about the Hebrew prototype of plainsong and its pentatonic foundations, and he applies this theory to the cantillation of the Bible. He endeavours to demonstrate by examples that Jewish composers have often spontaneously reproduced certain features of the pentatonic system, and that their melodies have thus been influenced by Biblical chant.

Milhaud writes about the Jewish population of a region of Southern France and its music. Jews are said to have settled there during the

Roman era. We know that Milhaud himself has turned to subjects connected with this part of his country (in the opera 'Esther de Carpentras' and in his 'New Year Liturgy' and 'Prayers for the use of Jews in the Comtat Venaissin').

Dr. Edith Gerson-Kiwi describes the archives of Dr. Lachmann, a scholar well known for his research into Oriental music and his collection of some 1,500 recorded melodies, including Oriental women's songs. "This class of song is of particular interest for research since, through the strict seclusion of Oriental women from the outer world, music of an extraordinarily early period and high purity has been preserved."

The production of the volume is quite attractive, though there are some amusing errors in the English, as, for instance, where a symphonic work is said to have solo parts for three "hornpipes" (horns); but the general level of the publication leaves much to be desired and a worthier presentation would have served the cause much better.

P. G.

*Musik und Kirche*. Cassel. May-June.

Maresch : *Die Bedeutung des Goudimel'schen Huguenottenpsalters von 1565 für die protestantische Kirchenmusik*. Klotz : *Vom liturgischen Orgelspiel*.

Tell : *Das Formproblem der Passacaglia Bachs. Gedanken zur Wiedergabe barocker Orgelmusik*. Mertin : *Grundlagen einer richtigen Orgeldisposition. Ein Beitrag zur "Funktionslehre"*.

The first article describes the great rhymed psalter made by Marot and finished by Béza (the Béza who presented the famous Codex D to Cambridge) and set by Goudimel. A facsimile of the Geneva Psalter has lately appeared. Herr Tell's exhaustive analysis of Bach's C minor Passacaglia embodies an attempt to clarify performance by grouping the successive variations in sets of three.

S. G.

*Rassegna musicale*. Turin. May-June 1938.

G. Graziosi : *Note sul' interpretazione*. L. d'Amico : *Petrassi e il suo 'Salmo'*. F. Vatielli : *Un ritratto di Antonio Vivaldi?* B. Beccherini : *Le 'Partite diverse di Follia' di Bernardo Pasquini*. L. Tomelleri : *Frammenti di musicalità dannunziana*.

July-August 1938.

E. Borelli : *Disavventure della poesia musicale*. G. Gavazzeni : *Loo! Jandek*. W. Bollert : *Bizet minore e sconosciuto*.

Graziosi's thoughtful article comes to this conclusion : "The complex of gifts possessed by an interpreter is not to be summed up as what is called 'genius', but rather as artistry and craft (*ingegno*)—the ability to discover, participate in and reproduce the genius of art". Among the great composers Chopin lends himself to the greatest varieties of interpretation; and why? Because Chopin is the most "lettered", the most psychological, and contains something for all temperaments. Debussy imposes himself on the executant much more than Chopin does; a modest pianist finds the Debussyan tone much sooner and more successfully than the Chopinian because in Debussy there is a greater clearness and formal coherence. Similarly Graziosi holds Beethoven, Wagner and Verdi to be more and less than artists; their humanity is so strong that it often bursts the banks of the channel of pure style,

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overwhelming us and constraining us to participate—beyond and beside the form—in their feeling at its most empirically human and personal. Bach, Mozart and Debussy do not oscillate between points beyond art, but are central. They are without contradictions or oscillations, which are therefore forbidden in the rendering of their interpreters, while such contradictions are the charm of Chopin, Beethoven, Wagner and Verdi. A Bach toccata, a Mozart symphony, 'La Cathédrale engloutie' allow of only one interpretation. In Mozart either one recognizes and adores the light he sheds, "the slight and delicately palpitating gleam", or else is hopelessly precluded from his poetry.

Orchestral conductors are compared with the directors of cinema pictures. The classic conductor is the director who, unseen, is the creator of the film without participating in the action; the romantic is the director who also plays the protagonist. The latter runs the risk of "exhibitionism", and "some of Victor de Sabata's performances recall certain superfluous and immodest close-ups of the German actor-manager Trenker". The classic conductor, the true interpreter, "is centripetal with respect to the most secret and precious nucleus of the work of art". Toscanini represents the type, as Sabata does the centrifugal romantic type. The romantic executant is in the greatest danger when the work in hand corresponds most fully to his personal predilections, and his excesses are most valuable when he applies himself to the transformation of ephemeral, bad music. "And this is, perhaps, Sabata's most peculiar merit." He asks: "Does not Toscanini's greatness reside in that 'coldness' and 'classicism' which are the ultimate expressions of a sacred respect for the score, a severe and scrupulous study of it, a purity of heart and of mind, and a complete lack, in a word, of that romanticism (understood in the artistic connection as a boiling and fermentation of temperament) which seems to form Sabata's fascination?" But while the critic finds that Sabata often misses equilibrium between himself and the music in hand, he allows that his interpretations are always interesting, and he cites him simply as being "the greatest and most illustrious of romantic interpreters".

R. C.

*Revue de musicologie*. Paris. February 1938.

Georges de Saint-Foix : *La troisième édition du Catalogue de Koechel*.  
Jane Arger : *Sur un recueil d'œuvres de Blangini*.

A handsome tribute from one great Mozart scholar to another (Dr. Alfred Einstein) opens this number. The remaining article deals at length with an eighteenth-century Italian musician and his activities in France. Of Blangini Grove says he was "a celebrated tenor-singer, teacher of singing and composer". He would appear to have started his career on the basis of good looks, on the strength of which and a voice he left Turin for France, taking with him his mother and sisters. Such piety was rewarded. He became *directeur de musique* to Princess Pauline Borghese and, as this article points out, being an opportunist, one who knew the ropes, he climbed high. In the Bibliothèque Marmottan there is a beautifully bound volume of his pieces, bearing the arms of Pauline Bonaparte. The music is analysed here, and would seem to have small worth.

S. G.

*Revue du chant grégorien.* Grenoble. March-April 1938.

D. Lucien David : *L'introit et la communion du premier Dim. de Carême.*  
 R. J. Maze : *Une retraite populaire annuelle : le Carême.* D. Lucien David : *La belle part des fidèles. Les Vêpres du dimanche.* L. Meryel : *Le chant et les tout-petits. Séance "Liturgique".* Amédée Gastoué : *Le chant gallican (Suite).*

The first of these exceedingly specialized articles deals with the interpretation of the introit 'Invocabit me' and the communion 'Scapulis suis'. The second is purely a matter of religious observances, music entering only in the final few paragraphs and then as adjunct to devotions. M. Gastoué's contribution has the most interest for the primarily musical reader and from that point of view is the most valuable in the issue as well as the most erudite. That which precedes it is a plea for closer religious supervision of the very young, with some remarks on the use to which music (handmaid indeed) may be put in such a connection.

#### July-August.

La Rédaction : *Le Psautier marial de Louis XIII.* D. L. David : *Les Complies ; prière du soir.* Amédée Gastoué : *Le Chant gallican (suite).* D. L. David : *Les Rogations avant les lettres et le chœur des chanoines au XVIIe siècle avant J.-C.* L. R. : *À propos de la Messe dialoguée.*

Among the royal musicians who have encumbered the path of the historian with compositions, mostly supposititious, Louis the thirteenth of France must be considered one of the most distinguished and his compositions the most clearly authenticated. "Incapable of applying himself to great affairs, but of sane and even acute judgment, Louis XIII excelled only in a passion for detail and for manual pastimes." So far the Enc. Brit. Louis dedicated "sa Personne, sa couronne et ses sujets" to the Virgin and himself attended to the details of the celebrations for this event by composing an 'Exaudiat', to be sung in all the churches in France. He is said also to have written a 'Psaume de psaumes' and it is the literary text of that which is given here, the music unfortunately not being included. M. Gastoué continues his valuable paper on 'Le Chant gallican'. M. David's article is important. It deals with a Cretan vase dating from the Minoan period of 1580-1450 B.C. The author examines a portion of the bas-reliefs on this vase which portrays a "groupe des chantres". His conclusions, too noteworthy to be compressed into this short notice, are commended to the attention of specialists.

S. G.

*Revue Internationale de Musique.* Brussels. May-June 1938.

Charles van den Borren concludes his article, begun in the first number of this handsome magazine, on 'La pureté du style et l'interprétation de la musique du moyen âge'. Among the points he makes is that in the music of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries instruments were used in a proportion unsuspected by nineteenth-century students; that, while it was the usual thing for a vocal part to be doubled by an instrument, different instruments did not redouble the same part; that it was not the medieval practice to perform vocal or vocal-instrumental compositions by instruments alone; that the notation of medieval music is, unlike that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, generally

complete in itself, apart from accidentals. On this last point the author observes : " What is above all important in this connexion is not to be influenced by modern harmonic conceptions. . . . The essential thing is to regard the independent melodic progress of the voices and to avoid alterations that disturb their naturalness ". He goes on to plead for recognition of the sensibility of medieval composers, with interesting quotations pointing not only to the personal feeling that prompted their art but also to the fact " that the executants were charmed and subjugated by the beauty of what they were called upon to interpret ".

Mahmut Ragip Kösemihal deals principally with Turkey in his article on music in the Balkans. He tells us that from about 1890 the Constantinopolitan aristocracy was interested in western music, and that in the time of the Sultan Abdulmedjid the palace boasted two orchestras, one of men, the other of women musicians. The latter provided music for the imperial harem. The players were dressed as men. Unfortunately, the economical Sultan Abdulaziz withdrew support from the interesting institution. Ill-starred, too, was Guédik Pasha's theatre. The Sultan Abdulhamid, witnessing there a ballet in which the dancers were, in accordance with the subject of the piece, armed to the teeth, took alarm, forbade the performance, and ordered the demolition of the theatre. The author gives a chronological list of the musical institutions of pre-War Constantinople and mentions the establishment in 1925 of a Conservatory at the new capital, Angora, where there is no charge for admission to the symphony concerts. Apparently the great difficulty in the way of organized music at Constantinople is the fact that well-to-do people live so far from Stamboul (on the islands, at Scutari, and up the Bosphorus), and also that students are allowed to attend concerts only on Sundays. But the Government has obtained the services of eminent western musicians at both Conservatories, and the author ends his article by speaking of young Turkey's enthusiasm for art, which is associated with the sentiment of national revival.

Petro Petridis, writing on music in Greece, describes a number of composers whose names are unfamiliar in the west. The late Emile Riadis, of Salonica, left " magnificent specimens of Greek song " and unpublished symphonic and choral works. George Poniridy, a Constantinopolitan who studied with Vincent d'Indy, " excels in religious choral works revealing a mysticism and lyricism in the best Byzantine vein ". Mario Varvopli, a pupil of Xavier Leroux, is gifted " with a delicate lyric inspiration ". He has written an opera, 'St. Varvara'. Dimitri Levidis is " the wistful author of symphonic ballets and songs of strong Oriental colour ". Th. Spathy is an outstanding violinist, conductor and composer of songs and of an opera. George Sklavos has written operas and symphonic works, and A. Evangelatos some considerable chamber music. Ch. Perpessa " has, like many others, sacrificed to the gods of atonality ". N. Skalkota has made orchestral arrangements of folk dances.

The spokesmen for the United States and Poland are Irving Schwerké and Alexander Tansman, and Jaroslav Tomášek has a substantial article on the present position in Czechoslovakia. Also to be mentioned is André Gide's charming paper on Chopin, a revised version of an article that had appeared in the 'Revue musicale' in 1931.

R. C.

*Schweizerische Musikzeitung*. Zürich. June 15th, 1938.

*Uraufführungen in der Schweiz*. Roger Vuataz : *Comment on écrit la musique pour les films*. Rud. Liechtenhan : *Programmstatistik der Orchesterkonzerte in der Schweiz*.

The two premières noticed here are those of Hindemith's 'Mathis der Maler' in Zürich and Honegger's 'Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher' at Basel. Of the former much has already been heard. The latter is less well known. It appears to be choral and orchestral music for a stage setting designed for Ida Rubinstein, the action and words by Paul Claudel. The article on writing for the films is more amusing than instructive. Nevertheless it gives a devastatingly clear picture of the abysmal depths to which the musician, taking his music with him, must sink in an endeavour to compass the ridiculous demands of film technique. Literally the music has to be turned out by the yard. The thing becomes a mere matter of measurement. Inspiration comes in where it can.

July 1st.

Hermann Scherchen : *Gedanken über Beethovens V. Sinfonie*. Karl Gustav Fellerer : *Der liturgische Gesang des Mittelalters*. Silvia Kind : *Ist das Cembalo ein Vorläufer des Klaviers?*

Scherchen's remarkable article should not be missed. With the minimum of anthropomorphic allusion (exceedingly little, in fact, for so romantically minded a German) and the maximum of purely musical analysis he makes live afresh this Symphony that often seems in danger of becoming a concert-piece and nothing more. There is next a useful article on medieval liturgical music, a model of research and inquiry.

S. G.

*Science Progress*. London. July 1938.

This is a quarterly review of scientific work. The current number contains an article on 'Jets musically inclined', by Dr. G. Burniston Brown, University College, London ; it includes diagrams and two plates. Jets of air or water have interested natural philosophers, as well as other folk, for centuries. They were a favourite study with Leonardo da Vinci ; Botticelli depicts jets in his 'Birth of Venus', and, as the author shows, depicts them wrongly. Tyndall, Kelvin, Rayleigh and many others, have speculated and written about them. The musician is interested because the mechanism of the jet lies at the root of tone production in nearly every wind instrument. The instrument maker's approach to the problem is largely empirical, but it is worth remembering that scientists are continually striving to widen the rational basis of our knowledge, a worthy object to which the author makes his own contribution.

E. O. T.

*Sovetskaya Muzika*. Moscow. April 1938.

G. Khubov : *The Art of the Azerbaijan People*. V. Krivonosov : *The Peasant Troubadours of Azerbaijan*. A. Spendiarov : *Autobiography* (marking the tenth anniversary of his death). A. Lepin : 'The Captain's Daughter'—opera by Sigismund Katz. G. Kreitner : J. Krein's 'Spring Symphony'.

Spendiarov (1871-1928) is known to English listeners mainly by his symphonic picture, 'The Three Palms' and his 'Crimean Sketches'.

He was a very minor disciple of Rimsky-Korsakov and this autobiographical sketch, written in 1913, is an equally minor document though not entirely without interest. Julian Krein's 'Spring Symphony' is apparently the first fruit of that talented young man's conversion from the sins of formalism and "impressionistic anemic preciousness". He now writes lyrically on a firm diatonic basis.

#### May.

A. Alschwang : *Nationality in Russian Classical Music*. A. Ostretsov : *V. Shcherbachov's Fourth Symphony (The 'Izhorsky')*. I. Martinov : *A. Khachaturyan's Trio*. Y. Solodukho : *V. Enke's 'Concerto for Orchestra'*. A. Lepin : *The Songs of Vano Muradeli*.

V. Shcherbachov's symphony, completed two years ago, is concerned with events at the Izhorsky Factory in 1905, the year of the abortive revolution : the strike, the subsequent fighting between the workers and the punitive troops, the blowing up of a bridge and so on. According to Ostretsov, the composer has failed owing to his wrong approach ; he has concentrated "not on the ideological basis of this deeply moving theme, but on purely episodic moments and superficial details". Or in Beethovenian language there is too much "Malerei" and not enough "Ausdruck der Empfindung"—a criticism that epitomizes one aspect of the contemporary official Soviet attitude to musical aesthetics.

#### June.

Y. Shaporin : *M. Gorky and Music*. S. Shlifstein : *Soviet Laureates*. VI. Protopopov : *The Musical Idiom of 'The Golden Cockerel'*. B. Yarustovsky : *Portrait of Tchaikovsky*. P. Tchaikovsky : *Unpublished Letters to V. Bessel*. N. Rimsky-Korsakov : *On the First Performance of 'Sadko' in the Moscow Grand Theatre* (unpublished letter).

An unusually good number. The Gorky article in particular is full of interest. As a young man Gorky had sung in the chorus of the opera at Kazan—by his own account he was "a very tolerable second tenor"—and his love of music in general and singing in particular never died. As Shaporin says, he possessed (like one of his own heroes) "a singing soul". And he was more than a mere amateur of Russian folksong. Shaporin heard a composer tell him that he (the composer) proposed to introduce a certain unpublished folk-tune in his new opera. "Unpublished ?" said Gorky. "It is printed in Maximovich's collection". And he at once named the precise year of publication.

In the course of his 'Golden Cockerel' essay, a first-rate piece of style-criticism, Protopopov quotes a letter from Korsakov to Findeisen (October 1898) : "Yes, I'm a true Glinka-ist, although I've learned from Wagner a great deal in harmony, instrumentation and other matters". The 'Sadko' letter is concerned with theatre intrigues against the conductor V. I. Suk.

Some of Tchaikovsky's letters to Bessel were printed in the publisher's own reminiscences of the composer, others in Modest's great biography and in periodicals. The twenty-five letters and the telegram here brought to light for the first time are of considerable interest. Even after the rupture of friendly relations in 1886 Bessel still wished in 1891 to publish the score of 'The Oprichnik', purchased seventeen years earlier—and

this provoked a furious protest from Tchaikovsky, who describes his own opera as "weak musically and positively ugly in instrumentation".

G. A.

*Zeitschrift für Musik.* Regensburg. August.

Erich Valentin : *Cesar Bresgen.* Karl Hasse : *Die grossen Meister der Musik und das deutsche Volk.* Walther Vetter : *Volkhafte Wesensmerkmale in Mozart's italienischen Opern.* Walter Gerstenberg : *Gemeinschaftsmusik und Konzert.* Konrad Huschke : *Max Klinger und die Musik.* Otto Spreckelsen : *Volkmusikalische Breitenarbeit.*

The subject of the opening article is a young composer and leader of the "Hitler-Jugend", a man of twenty-five, evidently a prolific writer and an active worker in the cause of the Third Realm. The short song and the minute piano piece that accompany this laudatory article are insufficient evidence on which to judge him as a composer. The next article is mainly politics. The third article also. Handel is a German composer. But Mendelssohn is not. "He is a Jew, and since music, even more than any other species of art, is the expression of national character and of the people's soul, Mendelssohn cannot possibly be a prominent German composer." The writer does not go on to explain where Mendelssohn may be allowed to claim his passport. Perhaps from us? We should account it an honour.

S. G.

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## GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### Orchestral

Bizet : *Jeux d'enfants* (London Philharmonic conducted by Antal Dorati. H.M.V. : C. 2940-1). First for a film, now for a ballet, this fine light music has served conveniently and gracefully all purposes and still retained its own special quality. This performance is adequate. It gives a decent account of the music, and although interpretatively it lacks distinction the result is more acceptable than it would have been had these little pieces, which above all are unpretentious, been treated too eloquently.

Haydn : *Symphony No. 88* (The N.B.C. Orchestra, conducted by Toscanini. H.M.V. : DB. 3515-7). It may be American studio acoustics, but there is a momentary and disagreeably noticeable hardness in the tone here and there which jars on the ear and makes an otherwise exquisite performance sound smart and new. The music is never smart and always mellow. The playing on this record is of the first excellence and apart from the matter noted above the issue is most satisfying.

Beethoven : *Symphony No. 7* (The Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Carl Schuricht. Decca : X. 206-210). It is peculiarly vexing when a good record has one relatively small blemish that gets continually in the way. That is the case here, where the first-violin tone is in the main too prominent and also of a particularly distressing female quality, as though some elderly prima donna were up to her old tricks. That said, there remains only praise to bestow. The interpretation is, if a little rigid, scholarly and straightforward, the actual playing admirable.

Dvořák : *Serenade in E for strings* (Boyd Neel orchestra conducted as named. Decca : C. 214-7). One of the lesser-known works by Dvořák and a most delightful thing. It is likable music, for it does admirably what it sets out to do and is unpretentious, a most refreshing quality, the more so because the music could justifiably lay claim to much in the matter of fine workmanship and beauty of colour and line. The performance is good in so far that it sends out the music clearly and in its proper shape and emphasis. There are some rough passages, but they are an exception.

Rimsky-Korsakov : *Cog d'or* (London Symphony conducted by Eugene Goossens. H.M.V. : C. 3013-5). This is the suite from the opera, issued presumably for those who are conversant with the music in the form of the ballet frequently played at Covent Garden. It is a good piece of recording and the performance has a right brilliance.

Rossini-Respighi : *La Boutique fantasque* (London Philharmonic conducted by Eugene Goossens. H.M.V. : C. 2846-8). The popularity of this ballet appears to be waning. There remains the music in which Rossini's simple little tunes are served with a piquant sauce manufactured

by the Italian pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov. This is the best record of ballet music, issued this year, that I have heard.

Tchaikovsky : *Aurora's Wedding* (London Philharmonic conducted by Efrem Kurz. H.M.V. : C. 2853-5). Here is one of the most stylish pieces of ballet music of that era. And it deserves stylish performance, which in this instance it does not obtain. The record can, unfortunately, be recommended only half-heartedly, which is a pity since the music is so excellent.

Wagner : *Parsifal*, Prelude and Good Friday Music (Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Furtwängler. H.M.V. : DB. 3445-7). This is an example of the right use having been made of a concert version of operatic music. Freed from the stage the music has been given a certain liberty of expression, so that it tells as music more than as an accompaniment to drama. At the same time liberty is not allowed to deteriorate into licence. Furtwängler, interpreting with a great deal of sentiment, yet keeps a firm hold on the music.

### Opera

Puccini : *La Bohème* (H.M.V. Album). The complete opera with Gigli as the star-turn singing wonderfully. This voice alone is vindication enough of the mechanical reproduction of opera. Another very expert piece of Italianan vocalization is to be heard on this record in the singing of Poli, and all the duet work between Albanese and Gigli is of the first quality. The orchestral playing is sound, but as is so often the case with Italian opera (and by no means only recorded opera), there is a feeling of perfunctoriness, as though in reality those in control were intent only on the vocal side of the performance. This may well have been the case, but the secret should have been kept from us. Puccini used his orchestra as effectively as his voices, and to stress the one at the expense of the other is, more than in most Italian operas, to distort the work.

### Solo Instruments with Orchestra

J. S. Bach : *Concerto for two pianofortes in C major* (Artur and Karl Schnabel and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. H.M.V. : DB. 3041-3). A wholly admirable record, workman-like, sound in rhythm and phrasing, of a good ensemble, fluent in motion. The pianists combine well, the orchestral part is an accompaniment when it should be and at times an equal, which is also right.

Mozart : *Pianoforte Concerto in G major* (K. 453). (Edwin Fischer and the Fischer Chamber Orchestra. H.M.V. : DB. 3362.) No conductor is billed, so it may be supposed the soloist was in control. The test comes at the joins and the way the band enters after the cadenza in the last movement in this record shows how well the trick can be done. Fischer's playing is very fine and the whole production has that quality of mingled grace and strength that one feels is particularly in place with a Mozart concerto.

### Chamber Music

Mozart : *Divertimento No. 4* (Trio d'anches de Paris. *L'oissau lyre* : OL. 15). A transcription for oboe, clarinet and bassoon of a work, the

autograph being lost and, therefore, the original form of the work being a matter of guesswork. The 'Divertimento' appears to have been published in a variety of instrumentations, possibly for strings and horns, certainly for two violins and cello. The justification for the present arrangement may be said to exist in the aptness of the sound. One immediately feels this is good wind-writing. The work has much charm.

Mozart : *String Quintet in D* (Pro Arte Quartet with Alfred Hobday as second viola. H.M.V. : DB. 3090-2). Once again the "pretty" Mozart legend is disposed of. The first movement has not a touch of it, while in all the succeeding movements there are passages that remind one, even in the minuet and the quick finale, of Mozart's acknowledged tragic writing. It is illuminating to hear an echo of a counter-subject from the 'Jupiter' Symphony in the last movement. The one cut (and what a pity it had to be done) is of the repeat of an astonishing peroration to the second half of the minuet that is positively menacing. The performance is thoroughly acceptable. The only quarrel one has with it is that the *pianissimo* tone never comes through as such.

Mozart : *Sonata for piano and violin in B flat major (K. 454)* (Magda Tagliaferro and Denise Soriana [piano] Col. D.X. 856-7). Ensemble good, violin tone inclined to be harsh. What is most commendable is the way the balance of interest between the two parts is held, with the result that the violin really does accompany the other instrument when it is its turn to do so.

Alan Rawsthorne : *Theme and Variations for two violins* (Kathleen Washbourne and Jessie Hinchliffe. Decca : K. 884-5). This was one of the outstanding works at this summer's International Festival. The present record has been made by the players who performed the work then. That they have made it their own is evident. It is a work of great interest and beauty, not in any way easy to get to know. The theme is followed by nine short, mostly terse variations.

Couperin : *Air strieux*. Rameau : *Air from 'Diane et Action'* (Lise Daniels accompanied by Irène Altoff. L'oiseau lyre : OL. 19). An attractive record of charming music well sung by Mme. Lise Daniels, who evidently is a musician. Her gentle, careful treatment of the Rameau song is admirable. That is the more distinguished of the two, though either would be a welcome addition to the poverty-stricken "French group" with which recitalists here fill out their programmes.

Louis Couperin : *Tombau de M. de Blancreucher* (Marcelle de Lacour. L'oiseau lyre. OL. 12). The character of this strange piece is that of some imposing monument hung with the funeral hatchments of entombed nobility. Played as here in the grand style, using all the resources of a big harpsichord, the effect is very moving. On the reverse is a 'Chaconne et Duo' by the same composer which has the same formal grace and dignity even in the tripping final movement. Both pieces are of great historical interest and the record is strongly recommended.

Guillaume de Machaut : *Hoquetus David* (MM. Foveau, trumpet, Lafosse and Tudesq, trombones. L'oiseau lyre : OL. 3). A historian's disk. The playing is beyond praise. Of the music it is as difficult to speak as it would be were one suddenly faced with a new work by Berg. One imagines the "hiccup" effect would be more noticeable in vocal

music of this curious kind. On the reverse is a *virelai* to the words "Or sus, vous dormés trop", sung by M. Archimbaud to an accompaniment of wind instruments. This is said to have been something in the nature of a popular song. The simplicity of its form, in complete contrast to the Hoquetus, inclines one to this belief. Altogether a most remarkable and valuable record.

S. G.

## CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editor, 'Music & Letters'*

Sir,

In his letter published in your July issue (p. 371), Canon Galpin reveals his complete misapprehension of the statements I made concerning the scale of the ancient Sumerians in my review of his book (April, pp. 210-212). It is with regret that I feel compelled to make an insistent rejoinder.

I certainly value highly Canon Galpin's life-long services to musical archaeology and his more recent fruitful research into the music of the Sumerians. I fear, however, that respect for the reasoned conclusions, ("linguistic, documented and practical"), on which he bases the music of this ancient civilization, will avail but little when his conjectures run counter to the direct and unshakable evidence provided by the silver pipes of Ur.

The silver pipes of Ur (2700 B.C.) present a musical fact which is at variance with Canon Galpin's theories. My identification of the modal scales of these reed-blown pipes—prototypes of oboe and clarinet—owes nothing to conjecture, nor is it even remotely indebted to the species of the ditonal scale described *ad nauseam* 2,000 years later by the Greco-Roman theorists.

The main point at issue is that these precious pipes of Ur—in common with all others having the same characteristic boring of fingerholes—embody a basic principle, universal in its application and independent of time and race as well as of skill—or the lack of it—in performance.

The message of such pipes, when the basic principle in operation has been grasped, is unequivocal and incontrovertible. Here theory and practice are unanimous in their testimony, which points with finality to a modal system and upsets the theory of a single seven-toned scale with tritonic fourth, claimed by Canon Galpin indiscriminately for all instruments alike, and more especially for the Ti-gi flute with its three equidistant fingerholes. The scale thus attributed to this flute is an unfortunate assumption which is invalid in the absence of any measurable specimen. For the scales resulting from that basic principle of modality are called into being by the subtle interrelationships of certain factors provided by the varying dimensions of each individual specimen.

These resultant intervals, however, necessarily differ from those of our modern scale, which are based on the semitonal unit.

Since these important instruments were used in the ancient religious ritual of Sumer and Akkad, they involve the musical system as a whole, and likewise its notation, in view of the author's conjectural interpretation of the 'Hymn to the Creation'. It will become evident in the future that the Pipes of Ur and their congeners present an invaluable musical fact which does not as yet appear to have been recognized.

Yours faithfully,

KATHLEEN SCHLESINGER.

Highgate, London, N. 6.

July 1938.

*To the Editor, 'Music & Letters'*

Sir,

Will you kindly allow me to reply to some points raised by your reviewer in his notice of my book on Palestrina?

First, may I correct any impression possibly formed by your readers that the musical examples were selected in any haphazard manner? On the contrary they are presented in accordance with what I think are common-sense methods, and need no "overhaul" in a future edition. Where a good modern reprint of a work was available (especially if published separately) I have quoted from this as probably most accessible to and easily understood by the average reader. Editions such as that of Breitkopf and Härtel, although invaluable to scholars, are unsuitable for general use, and moreover consist of expensive volumes. Where the musical quotation illustrated some special point I did not hesitate to alter note-values (preserving, of course, relative values) in order to make the point clearer. These examples are not intended for performance.

As such music was written in modes, not in those keys which are our modern method of indicating pitch, there can be no question of "original pitch." In one or two cases where modern editions suggest a particular pitch (by means of a key-signature), I have retained it, and so the quotation from 'Exsultate Deo,' for example, is printed exactly as in the Schola Cantorum (Paris) edition.

With reference to note-groupings for syllables, Palestrina's own editions show that he himself by no means always adhered to the system mentioned by your reviewer: indeed, he often left it to the singers (*cf.* illustration facing p. 126). Apart from this, considerations of space and the desirability of using short score where possible necessitated approximations in some instances, these being unimportant except to performers.

As for the statement that dates of publication settle the question of whether a certain mass or motet, upon the same themes, was written first, there is ample evidence that dates of composition have often no relation to those of publication where Palestrina's music is concerned.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY COATES.

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